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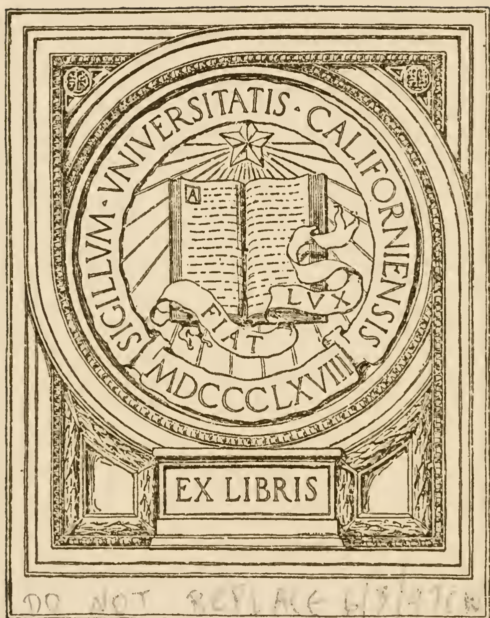
THE HISTORY OF DAVID GRIEVE

BY

MRS HUMPHRY WARD



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Willst du ins Unendliche schreiten,
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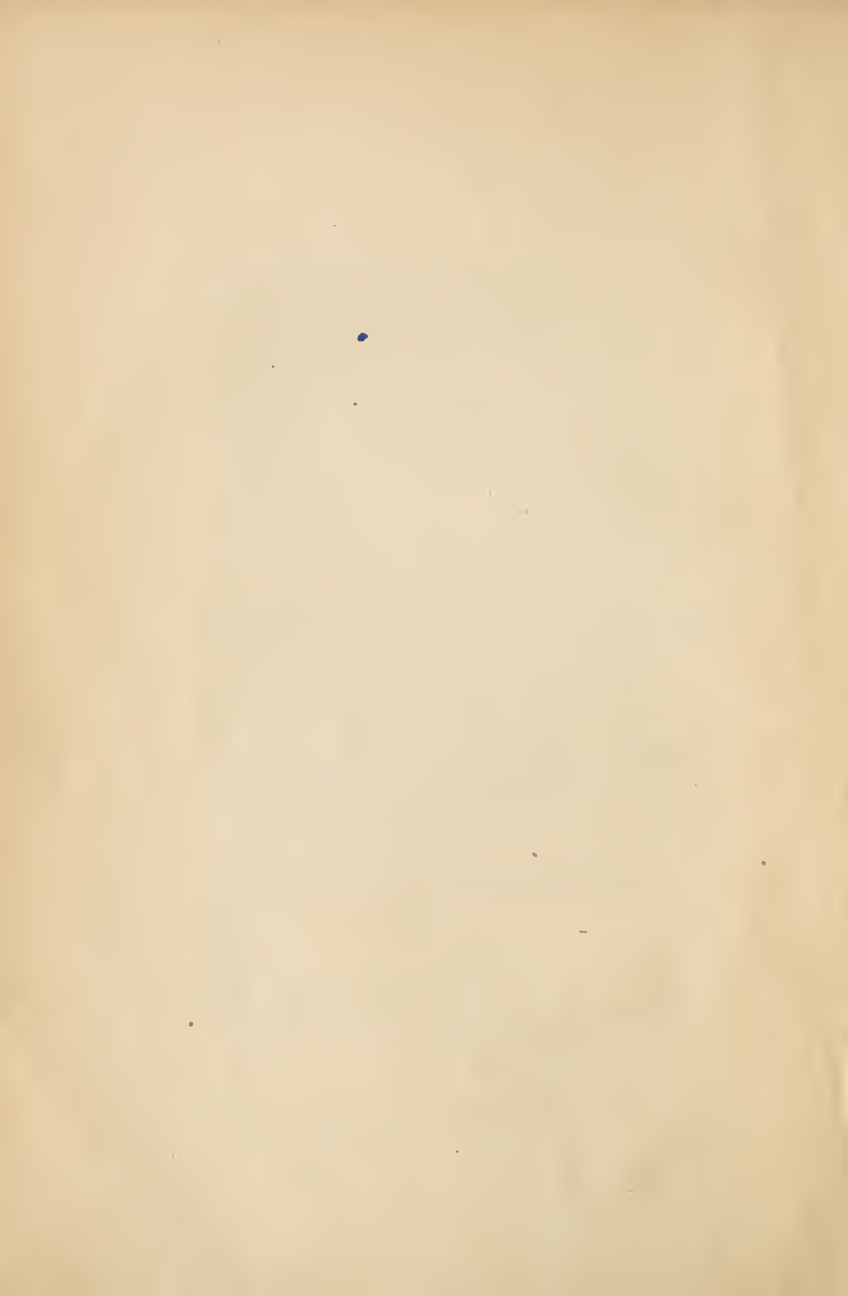

THE HISTORY

OF

DAVID GRIEVE

BY

MRS. HUMPHRY WARD

AUTHOR OF 'ROBERT ELSMERE,' ETC.

New York

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TO
THE DEAR MEMORY
OF
MY MOTHER

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PREFACE

LONDON: *May* 2, 1892.

DEAR MR. SMITH,

A few days ago there came into my head the idea of writing you—my friend and publisher—an 'open letter' which might serve, if you thought well, as a little preface to the sixth and popular edition of 'The History of David Grieve;' and I was turning the notion over in my mind when I fell upon a passage in M. Renan's last volume of 'Souvenirs,' which he has called 'Feuilles Détachées.' He is describing his relations with the 'Journal des Débats' and with M. Silvestre de Sacy, the editor of that well-known newspaper when the young ex-seminarist and future author of the 'Vie de Jésus' first joined its staff. 'I owe to M. de Sacy,' says M. Renan, 'some of the moral rules that I have always followed. I owe to him in particular the habit of never replying to newspaper attacks even when they contain the greatest enormities. When I submitted to him different cases of possible exceptions, his answer was invariable: "*Jamais, jamais, jamais!*" I believe that on this point, as on so many others, I have conscientiously followed the counsels of my old master. *Du haut du ciel M. de Sacy sera content de moi.*'

'*Jamais!*'

It is true that, a little further on, M. Renan, with his usual hatred of the absolute, begins to qualify and ponder a little—falls wondering, after all, whether 'nowadays M. de Sacy would not change his mind.' But all the same, that '*Jamais!*' of M. de Sacy lingered in my ear, and stood in the way of my own small project. 'No, no!' I have said to myself; 'M. Renan's old friend was a thousand times right. If I let myself put down the things now fermenting in me, I shall be answering my reviewers; and what can be more futile?—what even, if I may say so without arrogance, more superfluous? For, as our

English criticism is constituted at the present moment, does it not perpetually answer itself? It has no recognised leaders; and when it attacks, it falls at a moment's notice into violence. Now the snare of violence is contradiction; and if contradiction is not the note just now of large tracts of English reviewing, what is? Let it alone, and finish M. Renan's entertaining volume.'

But no. Even that '*Jamais!*' is not strong enough, and I take up my pen determined somehow both to write my letter and to profit by the wisdom of M. de Sacy. After all, does it not depend upon what is meant by 'answering'?

In the first place, however, that word 'contradiction' haunts me, and before I turn to one or two very general matters, on which I have asked you to give me this opportunity of saying a public word or two, let me draw your attention for a moment—a passing tremulous moment—to those three Quarterlies which in this month of grace have been bombarding 'David Grieve.' (Ah! I feel that when you come to this you will be nervous. You will say to yourself, 'This will never do—Mrs. Ward cannot, after all, refrain.' No, no! you will see it will all come right.) So let us look!—on our way to other things. As for me, it is like the bogies of my childhood—the more I look, the less I shake. There is, first of all, the writer in the 'Quarterly,' who is now, as always, what you might expect to find him. This time he is equally displeased with *all* the recent births of time. The situation in literature, as he describes it, is sombre indeed. Nevertheless, his style is tripping, and his humour confident; one perceives that after all, perhaps, at bottom, like the reader, he remembers that the 'Quarterly' has wailed over many generations, that 'howsoe'er the world goes ill' the thrushes still sing in it, and cheerfulness is best. Still, though he is cheerful, he is severely confident, and when he tells me in the same breath, first, that 'sixteen centuries ago' the religious puzzles with which people, and especially David Grieves, trouble their heads in the present day were all satisfactorily settled, and next, that 'David Grieve' is 'tiresome as a novel and ineffectual as a sermon,' I am for the moment so carried away by the Olympian sureness of the tone that I find both statements equally true, and am naturally depressed by the last. But there is balm—not only in Gilead, but where one least looks for it. Public report tells me that if the 'Quarterly' has used whips, the 'Edinburgh' has used scorpions, and I go on to my second reviewer in fear and trembling. And in the 'Edin-

burgh' I do indeed discover an extremely hostile gentleman writing in an agitation which betrays him into a very quagmire of repetitions, and finally leads him, through a breathless series of the most trenchant adjectives known to the language, up to the composition of, surely, two of the most incompetent pages ever penned in defence of the Christian religion! But at the same time I stumble on a little sentence dropped out by the way, which arrests me by its odd incongruity with its surroundings. 'David Grieve,' of course, 'is a failure,' but all the same the writer who so labels it contrives to admit that he has found it 'a powerful story, at times of absorbing interest.' How bewildering! But how soothing! For clearly the 'Edinburgh' and the 'Quarterly' cannot both be right. A book cannot be at one and the same time 'tiresome as a novel and ineffectual as a sermon,' *and* 'a powerful story—of absorbing interest.' The two statements cancel out like those mysterious sums of one's childhood, which I still remember as though they were some pleasant conjuring trick—amusing and impenetrable.

And when I bring in my third critic—him of the 'Church Quarterly'—the cancelling process becomes brisk indeed. My new reviewer holds up poor 'David,' if I remember right, as one of several shocking examples showing the decline of 'theology and morality' in fiction. But his ways are gentler than those of his colleagues, and I notice with some inward glow that he has let my tale-spinning beguile him a good deal. The 'Edinburgh' only rails the more because against its will it has been interested; but the 'Church Quarterly,' in the midst of its hard sayings, will still confess that it has laughed over Lucy's social pangs, and been touched by Lucy's dying. The book shows 'a *total* absence of humour,' says the 'Edinburgh' fiercely (the italics are mine, they merely represent the general energy of the context); but here is the 'Church Quarterly' talking of 'a refined and delicate sense of humour,' of 'mingled humour and pathos,' of——

But no! this is absurd. I must not count my compliments. I must remember that they too, for the moment, 'cancel out.'

Once more. The 'Quarterly' is clear that 'David' is 'distinctly and surprisingly inferior' to its predecessor 'in all the arts and devices necessary to produce a literary composition.' But the 'Edinburgh' puts it in this way: the 'workmanship, 'critical ability,' and 'gift of literary expression' are the same; the defects are about equal; but 'the later novel has greater interest, more passion, more power, and more pathos.' As for

the 'Church Quarterly,' it says roundly that 'David Grieve' is a great improvement, so that on the whole *this* little sum leaves me in good spirits.

Finally the 'Quarterly,' as I have before remarked, is so contemptuously certain that Athanasius and Nicæa ('sixteen centuries' back bring us up somewhere, I think, just behind Nicæa?) left nothing for German or any other theologians to do, and that all those 'puzzled commonplaces' which poor David stole from Germany or Oxford were really comfortably disposed of at that early date—it is so certain of these things, it tells us, that to this side of the matter it will have—or rather it endeavours to have—nothing at all to say. Its dignity revolts. And perhaps it remembers how much it had to say of this kind in the case of 'Robert Elsmere,' and will not repeat, even to a world that forgets. But the 'Edinburgh' neither feigns nor feels a composure of the sort. It stands and wrings its hands, lamenting that 'such an attack as Mrs. Ward's might well put the defenders of Christianity on the alert.' And meanwhile the biographer of 'David Grieve,' standing between the two voices—the voice of ill-assured contempt and the voice of angry alarm—does not know whether to laugh or cry! She can only find one thing to say—one little, foolish, personal thing. *Did* neither of these gentlemen ever possess a college friend with whom he talked and to whom he wrote on those matters of 'whence' and 'whither' which have a trick of engaging our attention at some period of life? No doubt, no one—or very few—ought to feel an interest in them. But still can he remember any such futile moments or no? If he can, were they not a part of life—for the time, at least, an important part of life—just so much and no more? And if they were, can he not allow a 'David Grieve,' who had no college friends, his thoughts and his journal, unorthodox and irritating though it be—as at least a part of life—so much and no more? Why scold his biographer because she tries to fill in the picture as each man's memory fills in his own? Is it her fault if every rich human life contains these things? The real point is, Do men and women trouble their hearts and heads about these matters,—do they affect action and conduct? If so, the novelist claims them as he claims all else that belongs to life—under the conditions of his art *bien entendu*—and the critic who will not play the game, so to speak, who stands and breaks into personalities about the painter when he should be judging the picture as a picture——

Here, indeed, I have fallen headlong into the snare! I am 'answering' on my own account—there can be no possible doubt of that—and I see your admonitory look. Well, let us come to the point. Let me have done trifling with M. de Sacy's '*Jamais!*' and take up those more serious matters for which in truth I am disquieting you with this letter. And first let me return a moment, but in another spirit, to my three latest critics, lest I should inadvertently misrepresent them as they, to my thinking, have sometimes misrepresented 'David Grieve.' It is quite true that some of their most formidable dicta 'cancel out' with astonishing neatness, and to the stimulus of that sense of humour in which the 'Edinburgh' finds David's biographer so deficient. But it is also true that in certain canons and methods of criticism they are very closely agreed; and because it is so, and because the articles are long, simultaneous, and conspicuous, it may be well to take them as representative of much else—I will not say in the mind of the public—but at any rate in the mind of a portion of the press. All three dislike and resent what they call the intrusion of 'theology' into a novel, and the two older Quarterlies are especially intolerant of 'the novel with a purpose,' of any writing within the domain of art which, as the 'Quarterly' puts it, aims at 'reforming the world.' Great stress is also laid—particularly in the 'Edinburgh'—on that method of reviewing which consists in putting together all that one may know, or imagine one knows, about the personal history of a writer, and framing one's literary judgment to suit.

Now these points—what is meant by a 'novel with a purpose,' or by 'dragging theology into fiction,' and the legitimacy of the 'personal' method of reviewing—are worth discussion, and I am not ungrateful to the Quarterlies for having turned my attention to them once more. Let me take the last first, as being the most diverting; for I have a certain love, as I fear my books betray, for a 'serious ending.' The 'personal' method consists apparently in examining whether to your knowledge the author of a given book has ever been personally placed in the precise situations he describes, and judging his work accordingly. It leads to deductions of this kind—'Mr. A.'s pictures of convict life cannot possibly be well done, since Mr. A.—we know it for certain—has never been a convict. As for Mr. B.'s descriptions of immorality and divorce—absurd!—we happen to know that a better husband and father than Mr. B. does not exist. And what does Miss C—— mean by talking to us about

peasants? Miss C—— lives—we have looked it up—in D—— Street, Kentish Town. Now what, we should like to ask, have English, or still more Scotch peasants to do with D—— Street, Kentish Town? As for Mr. F., we know all about his relations, and are not to be taken in; none of them ever attempted what Mr. F. has attempted; the inference is obvious.'

The danger of this method is that it is difficult to be informed enough, and that your literary judgments are apt to be kept waiting while you are quarrelling with 'Men of the Time' for not supplying you with detail enough to make them. The attractions of the 'personal' method of criticism are no doubt great. Sainte-Beuve has a rapturous passage in which he declares that he never understood Chateaubriand till he knew all about Chateaubriand's sisters. Still, by that time Chateaubriand was dead—which in this connection is something. Information of the personal sort is apt to accumulate after a writer's decease; and criticism, as the 'Edinburgh' conceives it, is thereby made easier. During a writer's lifetime I constantly notice that while the critics are spending time and temper over these matters, the public is reading the book,—which is after all more important.

As for the one literary assumption underlying these vagaries,—that a writer must deal with nothing but his or her personal experience,—it is of course a very respectable assumption. All that one has to say is that literature and the public have upset it times without number. It is tolerably obvious that Sir Walter Scott could not have personally observed the society of George II.'s day, or have lived familiarly in the society of Louis XI.; which does not prevent the 'Heart of Midlothian' or 'Quentin Durward' from being great novels. Another truism, you say. Very well. At any rate the successes of the historical novel prove that the imaginative treatment of life depends upon personal experience as *one* of its great factors, but by no means the only one. Personal experience, at least, of the narrow and technical sort. Every novel that ever touched a reader depends, of course, ultimately upon personal experience—that is to say, upon what the writer *is*, and can put into the framework with which experience or imagination, or research if you like, supplies him. But that is another question.

To return, however, to what are really the 'hanging matters,' with the Quarterlies, and with other people besides.

'The novel,' says a writer in the 'New Review,' 'will not

bear' what the writer of 'David Grieve' puts into it; will not bear, that is to say, the introduction of matter drawn from the religious and philosophical field. Naturally the proposition interests me. But it rouses in me a little amused wonder that a critic with so wide a knowledge of literature as Mr. Traill should imagine that the matter can be settled quite so easily. For as one looks back over the history of the novel nothing seems to be so clear as that it has 'borne' everything of whatever kind that a writer who could make himself heard was minded to put into it. In the days of Cervantes the novel, fish-like, swallowed other novels whole, and the adventures of the immortal knight came to a standstill while the fortunes and career of 'El Curioso Impertinente' unrolled. In the days of 'Julie,' the *cadre* supplied by the loves of Saint-Preux and Madame de Wolmar admitted of the introduction of a vast amount of material which would make the critic of to-day rise in his wrath—discussions of the opera, of the qualities of women of the world, of the existence of God, of the proper management of children and estates, and much else. The discussions happened to be interesting then, and they are interesting historically now. Rousseau wrote as the spirit moved him, choosing out of the variegated spectacle of life what attracted him, and the instant response of his generation—in spite of the sarcasms of Voltaire—showed that he was right. 'Wilhelm Meister' wanders, digresses, and preaches as Goethe pleases, but the man who wrote of life and thought in it had lived and thought; and, formless as it is, the book has entered into the training of Europe. Chateaubriand, George Sand, and Victor Hugo have bent the novel to all the purposes of propaganda in turn. Theology, politics, social problems and reforms, they have laid hands on them all, and have but stirred the more vibrations thereby in the life of their time. And which of them, from 'Don Quixote' downwards, will you save from this opprobrious category of 'novels with a purpose'?—which of them has not tried in its own way and with its own vehemence to 'reform the world,' whether it be by throwing an effete literature out of window, or by holding up the picture of married virtue and religious faith beside that of illicit love and empty doubt, or by showing forth the wrongs and difficulties of women, or by the passionate attempt to make the world realise the pressure of the pyramid of our civilised society on the poor and the weak at its base?

It is no doubt true, and the fact is one of great psychological

interest, that in England the novel has been specially objective, positive, concrete. Our novels since Fielding descend rather from 'Gil Blas' and that Spanish picaresque literature, the refuge of a people intellectually starved, which became so popular and found so many imitators in a seventeenth- or eighteenth-century England, than they descend from 'Euphues' or 'The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia.' We have always taken more delight in the mere spectacle of life than our neighbours; 'ideas' have on the whole, and for good reasons, been more distasteful to us than to France or Germany; and in the novel of our century we have the splendid result of both tendencies, positive and negative. Still there have been considerable exceptions. If one looks back over the fiction of the last fifty years, one comes again and again upon books that have broken bounds so to speak, and that have owed both their motive-power and their success to this desire, which the 'Quarterly' finds so terrible and so abominable, of 'reforming the world,' or, as I should put it, to the expression of 'a criticism of life,' which may advance, whether in the hearts of the many or the few, thoughts and causes dear to the writers. 'Think with me!' 'See with me!' 'Let me persuade you!' they seem to say, and again and again the world, or rather the world which belonged to the book, has let itself be persuaded, gladly.

Let us, indeed, exchange the idea of 'purpose' for the idea 'criticism of life,' and see how the matter stands. 'Poetry,' said Mr. Matthew Arnold, 'is a criticism of life under the conditions of poetic truth and poetic beauty.' For this dictum he has been roughly handled by the school which, in its zeal for certain elements and aspects of art, and under the influence of a narrow conception of criticism, would, if it could, divorce art from criticism and claim for it a divine and irresponsible isolation. But, in my belief at any rate, the task is impossible. Criticism lurks, and will always lurk, in the very holiest and secretest places of art. For the artist there is always the choice between this and that, between good and better, between the congruous and the discordant, between one sequence and another. Every act of literary conception is half creative, half critical, and could not be creative without being critical.

Alter two words, then, in Mr. Arnold's definition of poetry, and watch how it applies to the novel. '*A criticism of life under the conditions of imaginative truth and imaginative beauty.*' It is easy to see that the definition so drawn sweeps into

its net all the remembered novel-writing of the century. For even Miss Austen—that most detached and impersonal of all the great story-tellers—has her 'criticism of life' and makes it felt. With what glee and malice does she hold up to us the absurdities of aristocratic pride in Darcy and in Lady Catherine de Burgh, and how large she writes the lesson of Emma's patronising and meddlesome conceit! As for Scott, Thackeray, Dickens, Charlotte Brontë, compare the 'criticism of life' involved in the work of any one of them with that involved in the work of any conspicuous French novelist, of George Sand, or Théophile Gautier, or Octave Feuillet, and the contrasts of nationality will make you realise at once that each of these writers, however objective and positive he may seem, has all the while an ethical and social ideal which he is trying to make prevail. Each delights, as every artist should and does delight, in the mere play of the imaginative gift; but through each and all throbs the wish 'to reform the world' in his or her measure. The question is, can you have lasting imaginative work without it?

Well, but—you will perhaps say to me with impatience—this is all trite and familiar enough. What you call 'criticism of life' other people call 'individuality,' and very few dream of denying that the novel or the poem should have individuality—should embody a 'criticism of life' up to this point. The question is: How far is the criticism to be carried?

Ah! that is indeed the question, the whole question. All that one can say is there have always been two answers—the answer of those who wish to make of art a protection against life, and the answer of those who attempt to use it as the torch for exploring life. Do not attempt to carry your criticism, say the first, beyond the point of common experience, above all of common agreement. The world is rich enough within these limits; it will give you amply within them the wherewithal to laugh or cry, or wonder; for heaven's sake be content! and join with us in making of fiction and poetry an ark of refuge, a many-coloured shrine for the common perennial passions and emotions and delights of mankind, reared amid the clash of irreconcilable interests, and that surrounding darkness of the Unknown which neither philosophy nor religion, say what you will, can clear away.

A beguiling answer!—and what magicians it has called into its service! It was the creed of Scott and Miss Austen; in words at least of George Eliot; it is implied in the golden art

of Mr. Stevenson. We have all felt the charm and the persuasiveness of it; and in certain moods of life there is not a single man or woman that has not wished it, consciously or unconsciously, to prevail.

But there is another answer,—and it is equally legitimate. 'Nay, let us have no lines, no exclusions!' it says. 'Life divided into sections is life shorn of some of its fulness. There are no hard and fast limits in reality; the great speculative motives everywhere play and melt into the great practical motives; each different life implies a different and a various thought-stuff; and there is nothing in art to forbid your dealing—if you can!—with the thought-stuff of the philosopher as freely as with the thought-stuff of the peasant or the maiden. Still less is there any artistic reason why in picturing the individual human existence you should feel yourself bound to cut away from it anything that really *is there*. Either way, let there be no *parti pris*. If *we*, in our zeal to include ideas among the material of imaginative presentation, make the mistake of supposing that ideas are the whole of life, our work will come to nothing; and if *you*, in your zeal to escape the ideas which torture and divide, or those which present special difficulties to the artist, tend to empty your work of ideas beyond a certain point, it also will come to nothing. Each form of life-reading has its dangers. Success in ours is rarer; permanence less likely; the dangers more obvious than in yours. But the attempt is inevitable, and if we fail, we fail!'

The voices of Rousseau, of George Sand, of Goethe, are in this last answer. And as for me, shrinking under the onslaught of the Quarterlies, may I still be proud to count myself—however feeble, however weak—among that company? I am so made that I cannot picture a human being's development without wanting to know the whole, his religion as well as his business, his thoughts as well as his actions. I cannot try to reflect my time without taking account of forces which are at least as real and living as any other forces, and have at least as much to do with the drama of human existence about me. 'The two great forming agencies of the world's history have been the religious and the economic,' says Professor Marshall. Every one will agree that in his own way the novelist may handle the 'economic.' By and by we shall all agree that in his own way he may handle the 'religious.' For every artist of whatever type there is one inexorable law. Your 'criticism of life' must be fashioned under the conditions of imaginative

truth and imaginative beauty. If you, being a novelist, make a dull story, not all the religious argument in the world will or should save you. For your business is to make a novel, not a pamphlet, a reflection of human life, and not merely a record of intellectual conception. But under these conditions everything is open—try what you will—and the response of your fellows, and that only, will decide your success.

Ah! that response—how dear it is to us! Now as I am about to launch this second book into that wider public beyond the circulating libraries to which the ultimate appeal lies, as I launched 'Robert Elsmere' four years ago, my mind passes back over these years—over their hopes and emotions and surprises, their delights and their toils. I think of the many thousand persons to whom in that space of time I have become known; of whom in the pauses of work I inevitably think, with alternate yearning and dread. I remember that wave of sympathy which lifted 'Robert Elsmere'; I feel it still swelling about me, waiting, I trust, for this new book, to carry it also into prosperous seas. I should be ungrateful indeed were I to show much soreness under criticism, however hostile, however, as I think, unjust. For the world to which they were addressed has sent out kind and welcoming hands to these books of mine; I have in my ears the sound of words that may well stir and quicken and encourage; and in my heart the longing to keep the sympathy gained, and the ambition to deserve it more and more.

Yours always sincerely,

Mary A. Ward.

UNIV. OF
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BOOK I

CHILDHOOD

CHAPTER I

'TAK your hat, Louie! Yo're allus leavin summat behind yer.'

'David, yo go for 't,' said the child addressed to a boy by her side, nodding her head insolently towards the speaker, a tall and bony woman, who stood on the steps the children had just descended, holding out a battered hat.

'Yo're a careless thing, Louie,' said the boy, but he went back and took the hat.

'Mak her tie it,' said the woman, showing an antiquated pair of strings. 'If she loses it she needna coom cryin for anudder. She'd lose her yead if it wor loose.'

Then she turned and went back into the house. It was a smallish house of grey stone, three windows above, two and a door below. Dashes of white on the stone gave, as it were, eyebrows to the windows, and over the door there was a meagre trellised porch, up which grew some now leafless roses and honeysuckles. To the left of the door a scanty bit of garden was squeezed in between the hill, against which the house was set edgeways, and the rest of the flat space, occupied by the uneven farmyard, the cart-shed and stable, the cow-houses and duck-pond. This garden contained two shabby apple trees, as yet hardly touched by the spring; some currant and gooseberry bushes, already fairly green; and a clump or two of scattered daffodils and wallflowers. The hedge round it was broken through in various places, and it had a casual neglected air.

The children went their way through the yard. In front of them a flock of some forty sheep and lambs pushed along, guarded by two black short-haired collies. The boy, brandishing a long stick, opened a gate deplorably in want of mending, and the sheep crowded through, keenly looked after by the dogs, who waited meanwhile on their flanks with heads up, ears cocked, and that air of self-restrained energy which often makes a sheep-dog more human than his master. The field beyond led to a little larch plantation, where a few primroses showed among the tufts of long, rich grass, and the drifts of last year's leaves. Here the flock scattered a little, but David and the dogs were after them in a twinkling, and the plantation gate was soon closed on the last bleating mother. Then there was nothing more for the boy to do than to go up to the top of the green rising ground on which the farm stood and see if the gate leading to the moor was safely shut.

For the sheep he had been driving were not meant for the open moorland. Their feeding grounds lay in the stone-walled fields round the homestead, and had they strayed on to the mountain beyond, which was reserved for a hardier Scotch breed, David would have been answerable. So he strode, whistling, up the hill to have a look at that top gate, while Louie sauntered down to the stream which ran round the lower pastures to wait for him.

The top gate was fast, but David climbed the wall and stood there a while, hands in his pockets, legs apart, whistling and looking.

'They can't see t' Downfall from Stockport to-day,' he was saying to himself; 'it's coomin ower like mad.'

Some distance away in front of him, beyond the undulating heather ground at his feet, rose a magnificent curving front of moor, the steep sides of it crowned with black edges and cliffs of grit, the outline of the south-western end sweeping finely up on the right to a purple peak, the king of all the moorland round. No such colour as clothed that bronzed and reddish wall of rock, heather, and bilberry is known to Westmoreland, hardly to Scotland; it seems to be the peculiar property of that lonely and inaccessible district which marks the mountainous centre of mid-England—the district of Kinder Scout and the High Peak. Before the boy's ranging eye spread the whole western rampart of the Peak—to the right, the highest point, of Kinder Low, to the left, 'edge' behind 'edge,' till the central rocky mass sank and faded towards the north into milder forms of green and undulating hills. In the very centre of the great curve a white and surging mass of water cleft the mountain from top to bottom, falling straight over the edge, here some two thousand feet above the sea, and roaring downward along an almost precipitous bed into the stream—the Kinder—which swept round the hill on which the boy was standing, and through the valley behind him. In ordinary times the 'Downfall,' as the natives call it, only makes itself visible on the mountain-side as a black ravine of tossed and tumbled rocks. But there had been a late snowfall on the high plateau beyond, followed by heavy rain, and the swollen stream was to-day worthy of its grand setting of cliff and moor. On such occasions it becomes a landmark for all the country round, for the cotton-spinning centres of New Mills and Stockport, as well as for the grey and scattered farms which climb the long backs of moorland lying between the Peak and the Cheshire border.

To-day, also, after the snow and rains of early April, the air was clear again. The sun was shining; a cold, dry wind was blowing; there were sounds of spring in the air, and signs of it on the thorns and larches. Far away on the boundary wall of the farmland a cuckoo was sitting, his long tail swinging behind him, his monotonous note filling the valley; and overhead a couple of peewits chased each other in the pale, windy blue.

The keen air, the sun after the rain, sent life and exhilaration

through the boy's young limbs. He leapt from the wall, and raced back down the field, his dogs streaming behind him, the sheep, with their newly dropped lambs, shrinking timidly to either side as he passed. He made for a corner in the wall, vaulted it on to the moor, crossed a rough dam built in the stream for sheep-washing purposes, jumped in and out of the two grey-walled sheep-pens beyond, and then made leisurely for a spot in the brook—not the Downfall stream, but the Red Brook, one of its westerly affluents—where he had left a miniature water-wheel at work the day before. Before him and around him spread the brown bosom of Kinder Scout; the cultivated land was left behind; here on all sides, as far as the eye could see, was the wild home of heather and plashing water, of grouse and peewit, of cloud and breeze.

The little wheel, shaped from a block of firwood, was turning merrily under a jet of water carefully conducted to it from a neighbouring fall. David went down on hands and knees to examine it. He made some little alteration in the primitive machinery of it, his fingers touching it lightly and neatly, and then, delighted with the success of it, he called Louie to come and look.

Louie was sitting a few yards further up the stream, crooning to herself as she swung to and fro, and snatching every now and then at some tufts of primroses growing near her, which she wrenched away with a hasty, wasteful hand, careless, apparently, whether they reached her lap or merely strewed the turf about her with their torn blossoms. When David called her she gathered up the flowers anyhow in her apron, and dawdled towards him, leaving a trail of them behind her. As she reached him, however, she was struck by a book sticking out of his pocket, and, stooping over him, with a sudden hawk-like gesture, as he sprawled head downwards, she tried to get hold of it.

But he felt her movement. 'Let goo!' he said imperiously, and, throwing himself round, while one foot slipped into the water, he caught her hand, with its thin predatory fingers, and pulled the book away.

'Yo just leave my books alone, Louie. Yo do 'em a mischeef whaniver yo can—an I'll not have it.'

He turned his handsome, regular face, crimsoned by his position and splashed by the water, towards her with an indignant air. She laughed, and sat herself down again on the grass, looking a very imp of provocation.

'They're stupid,' she said, shortly. 'They mak yo a stupid gonner ony ways.'

'Oh! do they?' he retorted, angrily. 'Bit I'll be even wi yo. I'll tell yo noa moor stories out of 'em, not if yo ast iver so.'

The girl's mouth curled contemptuously, and she began to gather her primroses into a bunch with an air of the utmost serenity. She was a thin, agile, lightly made creature, apparently about eleven. Her piercing black eyes, when they lifted, seemed

to overweight the face, whereof the other features were at present small and pinched. The mouth had a trick of remaining slightly open, showing a line of small pearly teeth; the chin was a little sharp and shrewish. As for the hair, it promised to be splendid; at present it was an unkempt, tangled mass, which Hannah Grieve, the children's aunt, for her own credit's sake at chapel, or in the public street, made occasional violent attempts to reduce to order—to very little purpose, so strong and stubborn was the curl of it. The whole figure was out of keeping with the English moorside, with the sheep, and the primroses.

But so indeed was that of the boy, whose dark colouring was more vivacious and pronounced than his sister's, because the red of his cheek and lip was deeper, while his features, though larger than hers, were more finely regular, and his eyes had the same piercing blackness, the same all-examining keenness, as hers. The yellowish tones of his worn fustian suit and a red Tam-o'-Shanter cap completed the general effect of brilliancy and, as it were, *foreignness*.

Having finished his inspection of his water-mill, he scrambled across to the other side of the stream so as to be well out of his sister's way, and, taking out the volume which was stretching his pocket, he began to read it. It was a brown calf-bound book, much worn, and on its title-page it bore the title of 'The Wars of Jerusalem,' of Flavius Josephus, translated by S. Calmet, and a date somewhere in the middle of the eighteenth century. To this antique fare the boy settled himself down. The two collies lay couched beside him; a stone-chat perched on one or other of the great blocks which lay scattered over the heath gave out his clinking note; while every now and then the loud peevish cluck of the grouse came from the distant sides of the Scout.

Titus was now making his final assault on the Temple. The Zealots were gathered in the innermost court, frantically beseeching Heaven for a sign; the walls, the outer approaches of the Sanctuary were choked with the dying and the dead. David sat absorbed, elbows on knees, his face framed in his hands. Suddenly the descent of something cold and clammy on his bent neck roused him with a most unpleasant shock.

Quick as lightning he faced round, snatching at his assailant; but Louie was off, scudding among the bilberry hillocks with peals of laughter, while the slimy moss she had just gathered from the edges of the brook sent cold creeping streams into the recesses of David's neck and shoulders. He shook himself free of the mess as best he could, and rushed after her. For a long time he chased her in vain, then her foot tripped, and he came up with her just as she rolled into the heather, gathered up like a hedgehog against attack, her old hat held down over her ears and face. David fell upon her and chastised her; but his fisticuffs probably looked more formidable than they felt, for Louie laughed provokingly all the time, and when he stopped out of breath she said exultantly, as she sprang up, holding her skirts round her ready for another

flight, 'It's greened aw yur neck and yur collar—luvely! Doan't yo be nassty for nothink next time!'

And off she ran.

'If yo meddle wi me ony moor,' he shouted after her fiercely, 'yo see what I'll do!'

But in reality the male was helpless, as usual. He went ruefully down to the brook, and loosening his shirt and coat tried to clean his neck and hair. Then, extremely sticky and uncomfortable, he went back to his seat and his book, his wrathful eyes taking careful note meanwhile of Louie's whereabouts. And thenceforward he read, as it were, on guard, looking up every other minute.

Louie established herself some way up the further slope, in a steep stony nook, under two black boulders, which protected her rear in case of reprisals from David. Time passed away. David, on the other side of the brook, revelling in the joys of battle, and all the more alive to them perhaps because of the watch kept on Louie by one section of his brain, was conscious of no length in the minutes. But Louie's mood gradually became one of extreme flatness. All her resources were for the moment at an end. She could think of no fresh torment for David; besides, she knew that she was observed. She had destroyed all the scanty store of primroses along the brook; gathered rushes, begun to plait them, and thrown them away; she had found a grouse's nest among the dead fern, and, contrary to the most solemn injunctions of uncle and keeper, enforced by the direst threats, had purloined and broken an egg; and still dinner-time delayed. Perhaps, too, the cold blighting wind, which soon made her look blue and pinched, tamed her insensibly. At any rate, she got up after about an hour, and coolly walked across to David.

He looked up at her with a quick frown. But she sat down, and, clasping her hands round her knees, while the primroses she had stuck in her hat dangled over her defiant eyes, she looked at him with a grinning composure.

'Yo can read out if yo want to,' she remarked.

'Yo doan't deserve nowt, an I shan't,' said David, shortly.

'Then I'll tell Aunt Hannah about how yo let t' lambs stray lasst evenin, and about yor readin at neet.'

'Yo may tell her aw t' tallydiddles yo can think on,' was the unpromising reply.

Louie threw all the scorn possible into her forced smile, and then, dropping full-length into the heather, she began to sing at the top of a shrill, unpleasing voice, mainly, of course, for the sake of harrying anyone in her neighbourhood who might wish to read.

'Stop that squealin!' David commanded, peremptorily. Whereupon Louie sang louder than before.

David looked round in a fury, but his fury was, apparently, instantly damped by the inward conviction, born of long experience, that he could do nothing to help himself. He sprang up, and thrust his book into his pocket.

Nobory ull mak owt o' yo till yo get a bastin twice a day, wi an odd lick extra for Sundays,' he remarked to her with grim emphasis when he had reached what seemed to him a safe distance. Then he turned and strode up the face of the hill, the dogs at his heels. Louie turned on her elbow, and threw such small stones as she could discover among the heather after him, but they fell harmlessly about him, and did not answer their purpose of provoking him to turn round again.

She observed that he was going up to the old smithy on the side of Kinder Low, and in a few minutes she got up and sauntered lazily after him.

'T' owd smithy' had been the enchanted ground of David's childhood. It was a ruined building standing deep in heather, half-way up the mountain-side, and ringed by scattered blocks and tabular slabs of grit. Here in times far remote—beyond the memory of even the oldest inhabitant—the millstones of the district, which gave their name to the 'millstone grit' formation of the Peak, were fashioned. High up on the dark moorside stood what remained of the primitive workshop. The fire-marked stones of the hearth were plainly visible; deep in the heather near lay the broken jambs of the window; a stone doorway with its lintel was still standing; and on the slope beneath it, hardly to be distinguished now from the great primæval blocks out of which they had sprung and to which they were fast returning, reposed two or three huge millstones. Perhaps they bordered some ancient track, climbed by the millers of the past when they came to this remote spot to give their orders; but, if so, the track had long since sunk out of sight in the heather, and no visible link remained to connect the history of this high and lonely place with that of those teeming valleys hidden to west and north among the moors, the dwellers wherein must once have known it well. From the old threshold the eye commanded a wilderness of moors, rising wave-like one after another, from the green swell just below whereon stood Reuben Grieve's farm, to the far-distant Alderley Edge. In the hollows between, dim tall chimneys veiled in mist and smoke showed the places of the cotton towns—of Hayfield, New Mills, Staleybridge, Stockport; while in the far north-west, any gazer to whom the country-side spoke familiarly might, in any ordinary clearness of weather, look for and find the eternal smoke-cloud of Manchester.

So the deserted smithy stood as it were spectator for ever of that younger, busier England which wanted it no more. Human life notwithstanding had left on it some very recent traces. On the lintel of the ruined door two names were scratched deep into the whitish under-grain of the black weather-beaten grit. The upper one ran: 'David Suveret Grieve, Sept. 15, 1863;' the lower, 'Louise Stephanie Grieve, Sept. 15, 1863.' They were written in bold round-hand, and could be read at a considerable distance. During the nine months they had been there, many a rustic passer-by had been stopped by them, especially by the

oddity of the name *Suveret*, which tormented the Derbyshire mouth.

In a corner of the walls stood something more puzzling still—a large iron pan, filled to the brim with water, and firmly bedded on a foundation of earth and stones. So still in general was the shining sheltered round, that the branches of the mountain ash which leant against the crumbling wall, the tufts of hard fern growing among the stones, the clouds which sailed overhead, were all delicately mirrored in it. That pan was David Grieve's dearest possession, and those reflections, so magical, and so alive, had contrived for him many a half-hour of almost breathless pleasure. He had carried it off from the refuse-yard of a foundry in the valley, where he had a friend in one of the apprentices. The farm donkey and himself had dragged it thither on a certain never-to-be-forgotten day, when Uncle Reuben had been on the other side of the mountain at a shepherds' meeting in the Woodlands, while Aunt Hannah was safely up to her elbows in the washtub. Boy's back and donkey's back had nearly broken under the task, but there the pan stood at last, the delight of David's heart. In a crevice of the wall beside it, hidden jealously from the passer-by, lay the other half of that perpetual entertainment it provided—a store of tiny boats fashioned by David, and another friend, the lame minister of the 'Christian Brethren' congregation at Clough End, the small factory town just below Kinder, who was a sea-captain's son, and with a knife and a bit of deal could fashion you any craft you pleased. These boats David only brought out on rare occasions, very seldom admitting Louie to the show. But when he pleased they became fleets, and sailed for new continents. Here were the ships of Captain Cook, there the ships of Columbus. On one side of the pan lay the Spanish main, on the other the islands of the South Seas. A certain tattered copy of the 'Royal Magazine,' with pictures, which lay in Uncle Reuben's cupboard at home, provided all that for David was to be known of these names and places. But fancy played pilot and led the way; she conjured up storms and islands and adventures; and as he hung over his pan high on the Derbyshire moor, the boy, like Sidney of old, 'sailed the seas where there was never sand'—the vast and viewless oceans of romance.

CHAPTER II

ONCE safe in the smithy, David recovered his temper. If Louie followed him, which was probable, he would know better how to deal with her here, with a wall at his back and a definite area to defend, than he did in the treacherous openness of the heath. However, just as he was settling himself down, with a sigh of relief, between the pan and the wall, he caught sight of something through one of the gaps of the old ruin which made him fling down his book and run to the doorway. There, putting his fingers to his mouth, he blew a shrill whistle along the side of

the Scout. A bent figure on a distant path stopped at the sound. It was an old man, with a plaid hanging from his shoulders. He raised the stick he held, and shook it in recognition of David's signal. Then resuming his bowed walk, he came slowly on, followed by an old hound, whose gait seemed as feeble as his master's.

David leant against the doorway waiting. Louie, meanwhile, was lounging in the heather just below him, having very soon caught him up.

'What d' yo want 'im for?' she asked contemptuously, as the new-comer approached: 'he'd owt to be in th' sylum. Aunt Hannah says he's gone that silly, he owt to be took up.'

'Well, he woan't be, then,' retorted David. 'Theer's nobory about as ull lay a finger on 'im. He doan't do her no harm, nor yo noather. Women foak and gells allus want to be wooryin soomthin.'

'Aunt Hannah says he lost his wits wi fuddlin,' repeated Louie shrilly, striking straighter still for what she knew to be one of David's tenderest points—his friendship for 'owd 'Lias Dawson,' the queer dreamer, who, fifteen years before, had been the schoolmaster of Frimley Moor End, and in local esteem 't' cliverest mon abeawt t' Peak.'

David with difficulty controlled a hot inclination to fall upon his sister once more. Instead, however, he affected not to hear her, and shouted a loud 'Good mornin' to the old man, who was toiling up the knoll on which the smithy stood.

'Lias responded feebly, panting hard the while. He sank down on a stone outside the smithy, and for a while had neither breath nor voice. Then he began to look about him; his heaving chest subsided, and there was a rekindling of the strange blue eyes. He wore a high white stock and neckcloth; his plaid hung round his emaciated shoulders with a certain antique dignity; his rusty wideawake covered hair still abundant and even curly, but snow-white; the face, with its white eyebrows, was long, thin, and full of an ascetic delicacy.

'Wal, Davy, my lad,' the old man said at last, with a sort of pompous mildness; 'I winna blame yo for 't, but yo interrupted me sadly wi yur whistlin. I ha been occupied this day wi business o' *gräat* importance. His Majesty King Charles has been wi me since seven o'clock this mornin. And for th' fust time I ha been gettin reet to th' *bottom* o' things wi him. I ha been *probin* him, Davy—probin him. He couldno riddle through wi lees; I kept him to 't, as yo mun keep a horse to a jump—straight an tight. I had it aw out about Strafford, an t' Five Members, an thoose dirty dealins wi th' Irish devils! Yo should ha yerd it, Davy—yo should, I'll uphowd yo!'

And placing his stick between his knees, the old man leant his hands upon it, with a meditative and judicial air. The boy stood looking down at him, a broad smile lighting up the dark and vivid face. Old 'Lias supplied him with a perpetual 'spectacle' which never palled.

'Coe him back, 'Lias, he's soomwheer about. Yo need nobbut coe him, an he'll coom.'

'Lias looked fatuously pleased. He lifted his head and affected to scan the path along which he had just travelled.

'Aye, I daur say he's not far.—Yor Majesty!'

And 'Lias laid his head on one side and listened. In a few seconds a cunning smile stole over his lips.

'Wal, Davy, yo're in luck. He's noan so onwillin, we'st ha him here in a twinklin. Yo may coe him mony things, but yo conno coe him proud. Noa, as I've fund him, Charles Stuart has no soart o' pride about him. Aye, theer yo are! Sir, your Majesty's obleeged an humble servant!'

And, raising his hand to his hat, the old man took it off and swept it round with a courtly deliberation. Then replacing it, he sat with his face raised, as though to one standing near, his whole attitude full of a careful and pompous dignity.

'Now then, yor Majesty,' said 'Lias grimly, 'I'st ha to put that question to yo, yance moor, yo wor noan so well pleased wi this mornin. But yo shouldno be soa tender, mon! Th' truth can do yo *noa* harm, wheer yo are, an I'm nobbut askin for *informashun's* sake. Soa out wi it; I'st not use it agen yo. *That —wee—bit—o'—damned—paper*,—man, what sent poor Strafford to his eend—yo mind it?—aye, '*at* yo do! Well, now'—and the old man's tone grew gently seductive—'*explain yursel.* We'n had *their* tale,' and he pointed away to some imaginary accusers. 'But yo mun trust an Englishman's sense o' fair play. Say your say. We 'st gie yo a varra patient hearin.'

And with chin thrown up, and his half-blurred eyes blinking under their white lashes, 'Lias waited with a bland imperativeness for the answer.

'Eh?' said 'Lias at last, frowning and hollowing his hand to his ear.

He listened another few seconds, then he dropped his hand sharply.

'What's 'at yo're sayin?' he asked hastily; ''at yo couldno help it, not *whativer*—that i' truth yo had nothin to do wi 't, no moor than mysel—that yo wor *forcit* to it—willy-nilly—by them devils o' Parliament foak—by Mr. Pym and his loike, wi whom, if God-amighty ha' not reckoned since, theer's no moor justice i' His Kingdom than yo found i' yours?'

The words came out with a rush, tumbling over one another till they suddenly broke off in a loud key of indignant scorn. Then 'Lias fell silent a moment, and slowly shook his head over the inveterate shuffling of the House of Stuart.

''Twinna do, man—'twinna do,' he said at last, with an air of fine reproof. 'He wor your *friend*, wor that poor sinner Strafford —your awn familiar friend, as t' Psalm says. I'm not takin up a brief for him, t' Lord knows! He wor but meetin his deserts, to *my* thinkin, when his yed went loupin. But yo put a black mark agen *yore* name when yo signed that bit paper for your awn skin's

sake. Naw, naw, man, yo should ha lost your awn yed a bit sooner fust. Eh, it wor base—it wor cooardly!'

'Lias's voice dropped, and he fell muttering to himself indistinctly. David, bending over him, could not make out whether it was Charles or his interlocutor speaking, and began to be afraid that the old man's performance was over before it had well begun. But on the contrary, 'Lias emerged with fresh energy from the gulf of inarticulate argument in which his poor wits seemed to have lost themselves awhile.

'But I'm no blamin yo awthegither,' he cried, raising himself, with a protesting wave of the hand. 'Theer's naw mak o' mischief i' this world, but t' *women* are at t' bottom o't. Whar's that proud foo of a wife o' yourn? Send her here, man; send her here! 'Lias Dawson ull mak her hear reason! Now, Davy!'

And the old man drew the lad to him with one hand, while he raised a finger softly with the other.

'Just study her, Davy, my lad,' he said in an undertone, which swelled louder as his excitement grew, 'theer she stan's, by t' side o' t' King. She's a gay good-lookin female, that I'll confess to, but study her; look at her curls, Davy, an her paint, an her nakedness. For shame, madam! Goo hide that neck o' yourn, goo hide it, I say! An her faldaddles, an her jewles, an her ribbons. Is that a woman—a French hizzy like that—to get a King out o' trooble, wha's awready lost aw t' wits he wor born wi?'

And with sparkling eyes and outstretched arm 'Lias pointed sternly into vacancy. Thrilled with involuntary awe the boy and girl looked round them. For, in spite of herself, Louie had come closer, little by little, and was now sitting cross-legged in front of 'Lias. Then Louie's shrill voice broke in—

'Tell us what she's got on!' And the girl leant eagerly forward, her magnificent eyes kindling into interest.

'What she's got on, my lassie? Eh, but I'm feart your yead, too, is fu' o' gauds!—Wal, it's but nateral to females. She's aw in white satin, my lassie,—an in her brown hair theer's pearls, an a blue ribbon just howdin down t' little luve-locks on her forehead—an on her saft neck theer's pearls again—not soa white, by a thoosand mile, as her white skin—an t' lace fa's ower her proud shoothers, an down her luvely arms—an she looks at me wi her angry eyes—Eh, but she's a queen!' cried 'Lias, in a sudden outburst of admiration. 'She hath been a persecutor o' th' saints—a varra Jeezebel—the Lord hath put her to shame—but she's moor sperrit—moor o' t' blood o' kingship i' her little finger, nor Charles theer in aw his body!'

And by a strange and crazy reversal of feeling, the old man sat in a kind of ecstasy, enamoured of his own creation, looking into thin air. As for Louie, during the description of the Queen's dress she had drunk in every word with a greedy attention, her changing eyes fixed on the speaker's face. When he stopped, however, she drew a long breath.

'It's aw lees!' she said scornfully.

'Howd your tongue, Louie!' cried David, angrily.

But 'Lias took no notice. He was talking again very fast, but incoherently. Hampden, Pym, Fairfax, Falkland—the great names clattered past every now and then, like horsemen, through a maze of words, but with no perceptible order or purpose. The phrases concerning them came to nothing; and though there were apparently many voices speaking, nothing intelligible could be made out.

When next the mists cleared a little from the old visionary's brain, David gathered that Cromwell was close by, defending himself with difficulty, apparently, like Charles, against 'Lias's assaults. In his youth and middle age—until, in fact, an event of some pathos and mystery had broken his life across, and cut him off from his profession—'Lias had been a zealous teacher and a voracious reader; and through the dreams of fifteen years the didactic faculty had persisted and grown amazingly. He played schoolmaster now to all the heroes of history. Whether it were Elizabeth wrangling with Mary Stuart, or Cromwell marshalling his Ironsides, or Buckingham falling under the assassin's dagger at 'Lias's feet, or Napoleon walking restlessly up and down the deck of the 'Bellerophon,' 'Lias rated them every one. He was lord of a shadow world, wherein he walked with kings and queens, warriors and poets, putting them one and all superbly to rights. Yet so subtle were the old man's wits, and so bright his fancy, even in derangement, that he preserved through it all a considerable measure of dramatic fitness. He gave his puppets a certain freedom; he let them state their case; and threw almost as much ingenuity into the pleading of it as into the refuting of it. Of late, since he had made friends with Davy Grieve, he had contracted a curious habit of weaving the boy into his visions.

'Davy, what's your opinion o' that?' or, 'Davy, my lad, did yo iver hear sich clit-clat i' your life?' or again, 'Davy, yo'll not be misled, surely, by sich a piece o' speshul-pleadin as that?'

So the appeals would run, and the boy, at first bewildered, and even irritated by them, as by something which threw hindrances in the way of the only dramatic entertainment the High Peak was likely to afford him, had learnt at last to join in them with relish. Many meetings with 'Lias on the moorside, which the old seer made alive for both of them—the plundering of 'Lias's books, whence he had drawn the brown 'Josephus' in his pocket—these had done more than anything else to stock the boy's head with its present strange jumble of knowledge and ideas. *Knowledge*, indeed, it scarcely was, but rather the materials for a certain kind of excitement.

'Wal, Davy, did yo hear that?' said 'Lias, presently, looking round on the boy with a doubtful countenance, after Cromwell had given an unctuous and highly Biblical account of the slaughter at Drogheda and its reasons.

'How mony did he say he killed at that place?' asked the boy sharply.

'Thoosands,' said Dawson, solemnly. 'Theer was naw mercy asked nor gi'en. And those wha escaped knockin on t' yead were aw sold as slaves—every mon jock o' them!'

A strong light of anger showed itself in David's face.

'Then he wor a cantin murderer! Yo mun tell him so! If I'd my way, he'd hang for 't!'

'Eh, laddie, they were nowt but rebels an Papists,' said the old man, complacently.

'Don't yo becall Papists!' cried David, fiercely, facing round upon him. 'My mither wor a Papist.'

A curious change of expression appeared on 'Lias's face. He put his hand behind his ear that he might hear better, turned a pair of cunning eyes on David, while his lips pressed themselves together.

'Your mither wor a Papist? an your feyther wor Sandy Grieve. Ay, ay—I've yeerd tell strange things o' Sandy Grieve's wife,' he said slowly.

Suddenly Louie, who had been lying full length on her back in the sun, with her hat over her face, apparently asleep, sat bolt upright.

'Tell us what about her,' she said imperiously.

'Noa—noa,' said the old man, shaking his head, while a sort of film seemed to gather over the eyes, and the face and features relaxed—fell, as it were, into their natural expression of weak senility, which so long as he was under the stress of his favourite illusions was hardly apparent. 'But it's true—it's varra true—I've yeerd tell strange things about Sandy Grieve's wife.'

And still aimlessly shaking his head, he sat staring at the opposite side of the ravine, the lower jaw dropping a little.

'He knows nowt about it,' said David, roughly, the light of a sombre, half-reluctant curiosity, which had arisen in his look, dying down.

He threw himself on the grass by the dogs, and began teasing and playing with them. Meanwhile Louie sat studying 'Lias with a frowning hostility, making faces at him now and then by way of amusement. To disappoint the impetuous will embodied in that small frame was to commit an offence of the first order.

But one might as well make faces at a stone post as at old 'Lias when his wandering fit was on him. When the entertainment palled, Louie got up with a yawn, meaning to lounge back to the farm and investigate the nearness of dinner. But, as she turned, something caught her attention. It was the gleam of a pool, far away beyond the Downfall, on a projecting spur of the moor.

'What d' yo coe that bit watter?" she asked David, suddenly pointing to it.

David rolled himself round on his face, and took a look at the bluish patch on the heather.

'It hasna got naw name,' he said, at a venture.

'Then yo're a stoopid, for it has,' replied Louie, triumphantly. 'It's t' *Mermaid* Pool. Theer wor a Manchester mon at Wigsons' last week, telling aw maks o' tales. Theer's a mermaid lives in 't—a woman, I tell tha, wi a fish's tail—it's in a book, an he read it out, soa *theer*—an on Easter Eve neet she cooms out, an walks about t' Scout, combin her hair—an if onybody sees her an wishes for soomthin, they get it, sartin sure; an——'

'Mermaids is just faddle an nonsense,' interrupted David, tersely.

'Oh, is they? Then I spose books is faddle. Most on 'em are—t' kind of books yo like—I'll uphowd yo!'

'Oh, is they?' said David, mimicking her. 'Wal, I like 'em, yo see, aw t' same. I tell yo, mermaids is nonsense, cos I *know* they are. Theer was yan at Hayfield Fair, an the fellys they nearly smashed t' booth down, cos they said it wor a cheat. Theer was just a gell, an they 'd stuffed her into a fish's skin and sewed 'er up; an when yo went close yo could see t' stuffin runnin out of her. An theer was a man as held 'er up by a wire roun her waist, an waggled her i' t' watter. But t' foak as had paid sixpence to coom in, they just took an tore down t' place, an they 'd 'a dookt t' man an t' gell boath, if th' coonstable hadn't coom. Naw, mermaids is faddle,' he repeated contemptuously.

'Faddle?' repeated 'Lias, interrogatively.

The children started. They had supposed 'Lias was off doting and talking gibberish for the rest of the morning. But his tone was brisk, and as David looked up he caught a queer flickering brightness in the old man's eye, which showed him that 'Lias was once more capable of furnishing amusement or information.

'What do they coe that bit watter, 'Lias?' he inquired, pointing to it.

'That bit watter?' repeated 'Lias, eyeing it. A sort of vague trouble came into his face, and his wrinkled hands lying on his stick began to twitch nervously.

'Aye—theer's a Manchester man been cramming Wigsons wi tales—says he gets 'em out of a book—'bout a woman 'at walks t' Scout Easter Eve neet,—an a lot o' ninny-hommer's talk. Yo niver heerd nowt about it—did yo, 'Lias?'

'Yes, yo did, Mr. Dawson—now, didn't yo?' said Louie, persuasively, enraged that David would never accept information from her, while she was always expected to take it from him.

'A woman—'at walks t' Scout,' said 'Lias, uncertainly, flushing as he spoke.

Then, looking tremulously from his companions to the pool, he said, angrily raising his stick and shaking it at David, 'Davy, yo're takin advantage—Davy, yo're doin what yo owt not. If my Margret were here, she 'd let yo know!'

The words rose into a cry of quavering passion. The children stared at him in amazement. But as Davy, aggrieved, was defending himself, the old man laid a violent hand on his arm and silenced him. His eyes, which were black and keen still in the blanched face, were riveted on the gleaming pool. His features worked as though under the stress of some possessing force; a shiver ran through the emaciated limbs.

'Oh! yo want to know abeawt Jenny Crum's pool, do yo?' he said at last in a low agitated voice. 'Nobbut look, my lad!—nobbut look!—an see for yoursen.'

He paused, his chest heaving, his eye fixed. Then, suddenly, he broke out in a flood of passionate speech, still gripping David.

'*Passon Maine! Passon Maine!*—ha yo got her, th' owd woman? Aye, aye—sure enough—'at 's she—as yo're aw drivin afore yo—hoontit like a wild beëast—wi her grey hair streamin, and her hands tied—Ah!'—and the old man gave a wild cry, which startled both the children to their feet. 'Conno yo hear her?—eh, but it's enough to tear a body's heart out to hear an owd woman scream like that!'

He stopped, trembling, and listened, his hand hollowed to his ear. Louie looked at her brother and laughed nervously; but her little hard face had paled. David laid hold of her to keep her quiet, and shook himself free of 'Lias. But 'Lias took no notice of them now at all, his changed seer's gaze saw nothing but the distance and the pool.

'Are yo quite *sure* it wor her, Passon?' he went on, appealingly. 'She's nobbut owd, an it's a far cry fro her bit cottage to owd Needham's Farm. An th' chilt might ha deed, and t' cattle might ha strayed, and t' geyats might ha opened o' theirsels! Yo'll not dare to speak agen *that.* They *might?* Ay, ay, we aw know t' devil's strong; but she's eighty-one year coom Christmas —an—an——. Doan't, *doan't* let t' childer see, nor t' yoong gells! If yo let em see sich seets they'll breed yo wolves, not babes! Ah!'

And again 'Lias gave the same cry, and stood half risen, his hands on his staff, looking.

'What is it, 'Lias?' said David, eagerly; 'what is 't yo see?'

'Theer's my grandfeyther,' said 'Lias, almost in a whisper, 'an owd Needham an his two brithers, an yoong Jack Needham's woife—her as losst her babby—an yoong lads an lasses fro Clough End, childer awmost, and t' coonstable, an Passon Maine—Ay—ay—yo've doon it! Yo've doon it! She'll mak naw moor mischeef neets—she's gay quiet now! T' watter's got her fasst enough!'

And, drawing himself up to his full height, the old man pointed a quivering finger at the pool.

'Ay, it's got her—an your stones are tied fasst! Passon Maine says she's safe—that yo'll see her naw moor—

While holly sticks be green,
While stone on Kinder Scoot be seen.

But *I* tell yo, Passon Maine *lees!* I tell yo t' witch ull *walk*—t' witch ull *walk!*'

For several seconds 'Lias stood straining forward—out of himself—a tragic and impressive figure. Then, in a moment, from that distance his weird gift had been re-peopling, something else rose towards him—some hideous memory, as it seemed, of personal anguish, personal fear. The exalted seer's look vanished, the tension within gave way, the old man shrank together. He fell back heavily on the stone, hiding his face in his hands, and muttering to himself.

The children looked at each other oddly. Then David, half afraid, touched him.

'What's t' matter, 'Lias? Are yo bad?'

The old man did not move. They caught some disjointed words,—'cold—ay, t' neet's cold, varra cold!'

''Lias!' shouted David.

'Lias looked up startled, and shook his head feebly.

'Are yo bad, 'Lias?'

'Ay!' said the old schoolmaster, in the voice of one speaking through a dream—'ay, varra bad, varra cold—I mun—lig me down—a bit.'

And he rose feebly. David instinctively caught hold of him, and led him to a corner close by in the ruined walls, where the heather and bilberry grew thick up to the stones. 'Lias sank down, his head fell against the wall, and a light and restless sleep seemed to take possession of him.

David stood studying him, his hands in his pockets. Never in all his experience of him had 'Lias gone through such a performance as this. What on earth did it mean? There was more in it than appeared, clearly. He would tell Margaret, 'Lias's old wife, who kept him and tended him like the apple of her eye. And he would find out about the pool, anyway. *Jenny Crum's pool?* What on earth did that mean? The name had never reached his ears before. Of course Uncle Reuben would know. The boy eyed it curiously, the details of 'Lias's grim vision returning upon him. The wild circling moor seemed suddenly to have gained a mysterious interest.

'Didn't I tell yo he wor gone silly?' said Louie, triumphantly, at his elbow.

'He's not gone that silly, onyways, but he can freeten little gells,' remarked David, dryly, instinctively putting out an arm, meanwhile, to prevent her disturbing the poor sleeper.

'I worn't freetened,' insisted Louie; '*yo* were! He may skrike aw day if he likes—for aw I care. He'll be runnin into hedges by dayleet soon. Owd churn-yed!'

'Howd your clatterin tongue!' said David, angrily, pushing her out of the doorway. She lifted a loose sod of heather, which lay just outside, flung it at him, and then took to her heels, and made for the farm and dinner, with the speed of a wild goat.

David brushed his clothes, took a stroll with the dogs, and

recovered his temper as best he might. When he came back, pricked by the state of his appetite, to see whether 'Lias had recovered enough sanity to get home, he found the old man sitting up, looking strangely white and exhausted, and fumbling, in a dazed way, for the tobacco to which he always resorted at moments of nervous fatigue. His good wife Margaret never sent him out without mended clothes, spotless linen, and a paper of tobacco in his pocket. He sat chewing it awhile in silence; David's remarks to him met with only incoherent answers, and at last the schoolmaster got up and with the help of his stick tottered off along the path by which he had come. David's eyes followed the bent figure uneasily; nor did he turn homeward till it disappeared over the brow.

CHAPTER III

Anyone opening the door of Needham Farm kitchen that night at eight would have found the inmates at supper—a meagre supper, which should, according to the rule of the house, have been eaten in complete silence. Hannah Grieve, the children's aunt, and mistress of the farm, thought it an offence to talk at meals. She had not been so brought up.

But Louie this evening was in a state of nerves. The afternoon had seen one of those periodical struggles between her and Hannah, which did so much to keep life at Needham Farm from stagnating into anything like comfort. The two combatants, however, must have taken a certain joy in them, since they recurred with so much regularity. Hannah had won, of course, as the grim self-importance of her bearing amply showed. Louie had been forced to patch the house-linen as usual, mainly by the temporary confiscation of her Sunday hat, the one piece of decent clothing she possessed, and to which she clung with a feverish attachment—generally, indeed, sleeping with it beside her pillow. But, though she was beaten, she was still seething with rebellion. Her eyes were red, but her shaggy head was thrown back defiantly, and there was hysterical battle in the expression of her sharply-tilted nose and chin.

'Mind yorsel,' cried Hannah angrily, as the child put down her plate of porridge with a bang which made the housewife tremble for her crockery.

'What's t' matter wi yo, Louie?' said Uncle Reuben, looking at her with some discomfort. He had just finished the delivery of a long grace, into which he had thrown much unction, and Louie's manners made but an ill-fitting Amen.

'It's nasty!' said the child passionately. 'It's allus porridge—porridge—porridge—porridge—an I hate it—an it's bitter—an it's a shame! I wish I wor at Wigson's—'at I do!'

Davy glanced up at his sister under his eyebrows. Hannah scanned her niece all over with a slow, observant scrutiny, as though she were a dangerous animal that must be watched.

Otherwise Louie might have spoken to the wall for all the effect she produced. Reuben, however, was more vulnerable.

'What d' yo want to be at Wigson's for?' he asked. 'Yo should be content wi your state o' life, Louie. It's a sin to be discontented—I've tellt yo so many times.'

'They've got scones and rhubarb jam for tea!' cried the child, tumbling the news out as though she were bursting with it. 'Mrs. Wigson, she's allus makin em nice things. She's kind, she is—she's nice—she wouldn't make em eat stuff like this—she'd give it to the pigs—'at she would!'

And all the time it was pitiful to see how the child was gobbling up her unpalatable food, evidently from the instinctive fear, nasty as it was, that it would be taken from her as a punishment for her behaviour.

'Now, Louie, yo're a silly gell,' began Reuben, expostulating; but Hannah interposed.

'I wudn't advise yo, Reuben Grieve, to go wastin your breath on sich a minx. If I were yo, I'd keep it fur my awn eating.'

And she calmly put another slice of cold bacon on his plate, as though reminding him of his proper business. Reuben fell silent and munched his bacon, though he could not forbear studying his niece every now and then uncomfortably. He was a tall, large-boned man, with weakish eyes, sandy whiskers and beard, grown in a fringe round his long face, and a generally clumsy and disjointed air. The tremulous, uncertain movements of his hand as he stretched it out for one article of food after another seemed to express the man's character.

Louie went on gulping down her porridge. Her plate was just empty when Hannah caught a movement of Reuben's fork. He was in the act of furtively transferring to Louie a portion of bacon. But he could not restrain himself from looking at Hannah as he held out the morsel. Hannah's answering look was too much for him. The bacon went into his mouth.

Supper over, Louie went out to sit on the steps, and Hannah contemptuously forbore to make her come in and help clear away. Out in the air, the child slowly quieted down. It was a clear, frosty April night, promising a full moon. The fresh, nipping air blew on the girl's heated temples and swollen eyes. Against her will almost, her spirits came back. She swept Aunt Hannah out of her mind, and began to plan something which consoled her. When would they have their stupid prayers and let her get upstairs?

David meanwhile hung about the kitchen. He would have liked to ask Uncle Reuben about the pool and 'Lias's story, but Hannah was bustling about, and he never mentioned 'Lias in her hearing. To do so would have been like handing over something weak, for which he had a tenderness, to be worried.

But he rummaged out an old paper-covered guide to the Peak, which he remembered to have been left at the farm one summer's day by a passing tourist, who paid Hannah handsomely for some

bread and cheese. Turning to the part which concerned Clough End, Hayfield, and the Scout, he found :—

'In speaking of the Mermaiden's Pool, it may be remarked that the natives of several little hamlets surrounding Kinder Scout have long had a tradition that there is a beautiful woman—an English Hamadryad—lives in the side of the Scout; that she comes to bathe every day in the Mermaid's Well, and that the man who has the good luck to behold her bathing will become immortal and never die.'

David shut the book and fell pondering, like many another wiser mortal before him, on the discrepancies of evidence. What was a Hamadryad? and why no mention of Easter Eve? and what had it all to do with the witch and Parson Maine and 'Lias's excitement?

Meanwhile, the thump made by the big family Bible as Hannah deposited it on the table warned both him and the truant outside that prayer-time had come. Louie came in noisily when she was called, and both children lounged unwillingly into their appointed seats.

Nothing but the impatience and indifference of childhood, however, could have grudged Reuben Grieve the half-hour which followed. During that one half-hour in the day, the mild, effaced man, whose absent-minded ways and complete lack of business faculty were the perpetual torment of his wife, was master of his house. While he was rolling out the psalm, expounding the chapter, or 'wrestling' in prayer, he was a personality and an influence even for the wife who, in spite of a dumb congruity of habit, regarded him generally as incompetent and in the way. Reuben's religious sense was strong and deep, but some very natural and pathetically human instincts entered also into his constant pleasure in this daily function. Hannah, with her strong and harsh features settled into repose, with her large hands, reddened by the day's work, lying idle in her lap, sat opposite to him in silence; for once she listened to him, whereas all day he had listened to her; and the moment made a daily oasis in the life of a man who, in his own dull, peasant way, knew that he was a failure, and knew also that no one was so well aware of it as his wife.

With David and Louie the absorbing interest was generally to see whether the prayer would be over before the eight-day clock struck nine, or whether the loud whirr which preceded that event would be suddenly and deafeningly let loose upon Uncle Reuben in the middle of his peroration, as sometimes happened when the speaker forgot himself. To-night that catastrophe was just avoided by a somewhat obvious hurry through the Lord's Prayer. When they rose from their knees Hannah put away the Bible, the boy and girl raced each other upstairs, and the elders were left alone.

An hour passed away. Reuben was dozing peacefully in the chimney-corner; Aunt Hannah had just finished putting a patch

on a pair of Reuben's trousers, was folding up her work and preparing to rouse her slumbering companion, when a sound overhead caught her ear.

'What's that chilt at now?' she exclaimed angrily, getting up and listening. 'She'd owt ta been in bed long ago. Soomthin mischeevous, I'll be bound.' And lighting a dip beside her, she went upstairs with a treacherously quiet step. There was a sound of an opening door, and then Reuben downstairs was startled out of his snooze by a sudden gamut of angry cries, a scurrying of feet, and Hannah scolding loudly—

'Coom downstairs wi yo!—coom down an show your uncle what a figure o' foon yo'n been makkin o' yorsel! I'st teach yo to burn three candles down awbut to nothink 'at yo may bedizen yorsel in this way. Coom along wi yo.'

There was a scuffle on the stairs, and then Hannah burst open the door, dragging in an extraordinary figure indeed. Struggling and crying in her aunt's grip was Louie. White trailing folds swept behind her; a white garment underneath, apparently her nightgown, was festooned with an old red-and-blue striped sash of some foreign make. Round her neck hung a necklace of that gold filigree work which spreads from Genoa all along the Riviera; her magnificent hair hung in masses over her shoulders, crowned by the primroses of the morning, which had been hurriedly twisted into a wreath by a bit of red ribbon rummaged out of some drawer of odds-and-ends; and her thin brown arms and hands appeared under the white cloak—nothing but a sheet—which was being now trodden underfoot in the child's passionate efforts to get away from her aunt. Ten minutes before she had been a happy queen flaunting over her attic floor in a dream of joy before a broken, propped-up looking-glass under the splendid illumination of three dips, long since secreted for purposes of the kind. Now she was a bedraggled, tear-stained Fury, with a fierce humiliation and a boundless hatred glaring out of the eyes, which in Aunt Hannah's opinion were so big as to be 'right down oogly.' Poor Louie!

Uncle Reuben, startled from his snooze by this apparition, looked at it with a sleepy bewilderment, and fumbled for his spectacles. 'Ay, yo'd better luke at her close,' said Hannah, grimly, giving her niece a violent shake as she spoke; 'I wor set yo should just see her fur yance at her antics. Yo say soomtimes I'm hard on her. Well, I'd ask ony pusson aloive if they'd put up wi this soart o' thing—dressin up like a bad hizzy that waaks t' streets, wi three candles—*three*, I tell yo, Reuben—flarin away, and the curtains close to, an nothink but the Lord's mussy keepin 'em from catchin. An she peacockin an gallivantin away enough to mak a cat laugh!'

And Aunt Hannah in her enraged scorn even undertook a grotesque and mincing imitation of the peacocking aforesaid. 'Let goo!' muttered Louie between her shut teeth, and with a wild strength she at last flung off her aunt and sprang for the door. But Hannah was too quick for her and put her back against it.

'No—yo'll not goo till your ooncle there's gien yo a word. He *shan't* say I'm hard on yo for nothink, yo good-for-nowt little powsement—he shall see yo as yo are!'

And with the bitterness of a smouldering grievance, expressed in every feature, Hannah looked peremptorily at her husband. He, poor man, was much perplexed. The hour of devotion was past, and outside it he was not accustomed to be placed in important situations.

'Louie—didn't yo know yo wor a bad gell to stay up and burn t' candles, an fret your aunt?' he said with a feeble solemnity, his look fixed on the huddled white figure against the mahogany press.

Louie stood with eyes resolutely cast down, and a forced smile, tremulous, but insolent to a degree, slowly lifting up the corners of her mouth as Uncle Reuben addressed her. The tears were still running off her face, but she meant her smile to convey the indomitable scorn for her tormentors which not even Aunt Hannah could shake out of her.

Hannah Grieve was exasperated by the child's expression.

'Yo little sloot!' she said, seizing her by the arm again, and losing her temper for good and all, 'yo've got your mither's bad blude in yo—an it ull coom out, happen what may!'

'Hannah!' exclaimed Reuben, 'Hannah—mind yoursel.'

'My mither's *dead*,' said the child, slowly raising her dark, burning eyes. 'My mither worn't bad; an if yo say she wor, yo're a *beast* for sayin it! I wish it wor yo wor dead, an my mither wor here instead o' yo!'

To convey the concentrated rage of this speech is impossible. It seemed to Hannah that the child had the evil eye. Even she quailed under it.

'Go 'long wi yo,' she said grimly, in a white heat, while she opened the door—'an the less yo coom into *my* way for t' future, the better.'

She pushed the child out and shut the door.

'Yo *are* hard on her, Hannah!' exclaimed Reuben, in his perplexity—pricked, too, as usual in his conscience.

The repetition of this parrot-cry, as it seemed to her, maddened his wife.

'She's a wanton's brat,' she said violently; 'an she's got t' wanton's blood.'

Reuben was silent. He was afraid of his wife in these moods. Hannah began, with trembling hands, to pick up the contents of her work-basket, which had been overturned in the scuffle.

Meanwhile Louie rushed upstairs, stumbling over and tearing her finery, the convulsive sobs beginning again as soon as the tension of her aunt's hated presence was removed.

At the top she ran against something in the dark. It was David, who had been hanging over the stairs, listening. But she flung past him.

'What's t' matter, Louie?' he asked in a loud whisper through

the door she shut in his face; 'what's th' owd crosspatch been slangin about?'

But he got no answer, and he was afraid of being caught by Aunt Hannah if he forced his way in. So he went back to his own room, and closed, without latching, his door. He had had an inch of dip to go to bed with, and had spent that on reading. His book was a battered copy of 'Anson's Voyages,' which also came from 'Lias's store, and he had been straining his eyes over it with enchantment. Then had come the sudden noise upstairs and down, and his candle and his pleasure had gone out together. The heavy footsteps of his uncle and aunt ascending warned him to keep quiet. They turned into their room, and locked their door as their habit was. David noiselessly opened his window and looked out.

A clear moonlight reigned outside. He could distinguish the rounded shapes, the occasional movements of the sheep in their pen to the right of the farmyard. The trees in the field threw long shadows down the white slope; to his left was the cart-shed with its black caverns and recesses, and the branches of the apple-trees against the luminous sky. Owls were calling in the woods below; sometimes a bell round the neck of one of the sheep tinkled a little, and the river made a distant background of sound.

The boy's heart grew heavy. After the noises in the Grieves' room ceased he listened for something which he knew must be in the air, and caught it—the sound of a child's long, smothered sobs. On most nights they would not have made much impression on him. Louie's ways with her brother were no more engaging than with the rest of the world; and she was not a creature who invited consolation from anybody. David, too, with his power of escape at any time into a world of books and dreams or simply into the wild shepherd life of the moors, was often inclined to a vague irritation with Louie's state of perpetual revolt. The food *was* nasty, their clothes *were* ugly and scanty, Aunt Hannah *was* as hard as nails—at the same time Louie was enough to put anybody's back up. What did she get by it?—that was his feeling; though, perhaps, he never shaped it. He had never felt much pity for her. She had a way of putting herself out of court, and he was, of course, too young to see her life or his own as a whole. What their relationship might mean to him was still vague—to be decided by the future. Whatever softness there was in the boy was at this moment called out by other people—by old 'Lias and his wife; by Mr. Ancrum, the lame minister at Clough End; by the dogs; hardly ever by Louie. He had grown used, moreover, to her perpetual explosions, and took them generally with a boy's natural callousness.

But to-night her woes affected him as they had never done before. The sound of her sobbing, as he stood listening, gradually roused in him an unbearable restlessness. An unaccountable depression stole upon him — the reaction, perhaps,

from a good deal of mental exertion and excitement in the day. A sort of sick distaste awoke in him for most of the incidents of existence—for Aunt Hannah, for Uncle Reuben's incomprehensible prayers, for the thought of the long Puritanical Sunday just coming. And, in addition, the low vibrations of that distant sobbing stirred in him again, by association, certain memories which were like a clutch of physical pain, and which the healthy young animal instinctively and passionately avoided whenever it could. But to-night, in the dark and in solitude, there were no distractions, and as the boy put his head down on his arms, rolling it from side to side as though to shake them off, the same old images pursued him—the lodging-house room, and the curtainless iron bed in which he slept with his father; reminiscences of some long, inexplicable anguish through which that father had passed; then of his death, and his own lonely crying. He seemed still to *feel* the strange sheets in that bed upstairs, where a compassionate fellow-lodger had put him the night after his father died; he sat up again bewildered in the cold dawn, filled with a home-sickness too benumbing for words. He resented these memories, tried to banish them; but the nature on which they were impressed was deep and rich, and, once shaken, vibrated long. The boy trembled through and through. The more he was ordinarily shed abroad, diffused in the life of sensation and boundless mental curiosity, the blacker were these rare moments of self-consciousness, when all the world seemed pain, an iron vice which pinched and tortured him.

At last he went to his door, pulled it gently open, and with bare feet went across to Louie's room, which he entered with infinite caution. The moonlight was streaming in on the poor gauds, which lay wildly scattered over the floor. David looked at them with amazement. Amongst them he saw something glittering. He picked it up, saw it was a gold necklace which had been his mother's, and carefully put it on the little toilet table.

Then he walked on to the bed. Louie was lying with her face turned away from him. A certain pause in the sobbing as he came near told him that she knew he was there. But it began again directly, being indeed a physical relief which the child could not deny herself. He stood beside her awkwardly. He could think of nothing to say. But timidly he stretched out his hand and laid the back of it against her wet cheek. He half expected she would shake it off, but she did not. It made him feel less lonely that she let it stay; the impulse to comfort had somehow brought himself comfort. He stood there, feeling very cold, thinking a whirlwind of thoughts about old 'Lias, about the sheep, about Titus and Jerusalem, and about Louie's extraordinary proceedings—till suddenly it struck him that Louie was not crying any more. He bent over her. The sobs had changed into the long breaths of sleep, and, gently drawing away his hand, he crept off to bed.

CHAPTER IV

It was Sunday afternoon, still cold, nipping, and sunny. Reuben Grieve sat at the door of the farmhouse, his pipe in his hand, a 'good book' on his knee. Beyond the wall which bounded the farmyard he could hear occasional voices. The children were sitting there, he supposed. It gave him a sensation of pleasure once to hear a shrill laugh, which he knew was Louie's. For all this morning, through the long services in the 'Christian Brethren' chapel at Clough End, and on the walk home, he had been once more pricked in his conscience. Hannah and Louie were not on speaking terms. At meals the aunt assigned the child her coarse food without a word, and on the way to chapel and back there had been a stony silence between them. It was evident, even to his dull mind, that the girl was white and thin, and that between her wild temper and mischief and the mirth of other children there was a great difference. Moreover, certain passages in the chapel prayers that morning had come home sharply to a mind whereof the only definite gift was a true religious sensitiveness. The text of the sermon especially—'Whoso loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how shall he love God, whom he hath not seen?'—vibrated like an accusing voice within him. As he sat in the doorway, with the sun stealing in upon him, the clock ticking loudly at his back, and the hens scratching round the steps, he began to think with much discomfort about his dead brother and his brother's children.

As to his memories of the past, they may perhaps be transformed here into a short family history, with some details added which had no place in Reuben's mind. Twenty years before this present date Needham—once Needham's—Farm had been held by Reuben's father, a certain James Grieve. He had originally been a kind of farm-labourer on the Berwickshire border, who, driven southwards in search of work by the stress of the bad years which followed the great war, had wandered on, taking a job of work here and another there, and tramping many a score of weary miles between, till at last in this remote Derbyshire valley he had found a final anchorage. Needham Farm was then occupied by a young couple of the name of Pierson, beginning life under fairly prosperous circumstances. James Grieve took service with them, and they valued his strong sinews and stern Calvinistic probity as they deserved. But he had hardly been two years on the farm when his young employer, dozing one winter evening on the shafts of his cart coming back from Glossop market, fell off, was run over, and killed. The widow, a young thing, nearly lost her senses with grief, and James, a man of dour exterior and few words, set himself to keep things going on the farm till she was able to look life in the face again. Her sister came to be with her, and there was a child born, which died. She was left better

provided for than most women of her class, and she had expectations from her parents. After the child's death, when the widow began to go about again, and James still managed all the work of the farm, the neighbours naturally fell talking. James took no notice, and he was not a man to meddle with, either in a public-house or elsewhere. But presently a crop of suitors for the widow began to appear, and it became necessary also to settle the destiny of the farm. No one outside ever knew how it came about, for Jenny Pierson, who was a soft, prettyish creature, had given no particular sign; but one Sunday morning the banns of James Grieve, bachelor, and Jenny Pierson, widow, were suddenly given out in the Presbyterian chapel at Clough End, to the mingled astonishment and disgust of the neighbourhood.

Years passed away. James held his own for a time with any farmer of the neighbourhood. But, by the irony of fate, the prosperity which his industry and tenacity deserved was filched from him little by little by the ill-health of his wife. She bore him two sons, Reuben and Alexander, and then she sank into a hopeless, fretful invalid, tormented by the internal ailment of which she ultimately died. But the small farmer who employs little or no labour is lost without an active wife. If he has to pay for the milking of his cows, the making of his butter, the cooking of his food, and the nursing of his children, his little margin of profit is soon eaten away; and with the disappearance of this margin, existence becomes a blind struggle. Even James Grieve, the man of iron will and indomitable industry, was beaten at last in the unequal contest. The life at the farm became bitter and tragic. Jenny grew more helpless and more peevish year by year; James was not exactly unkind to her, but he could not but revenge upon her in some degree that ruin of his silent ambitions which her sickliness had brought upon him.

The two sons grew up in the most depressing atmosphere conceivable. Reuben, who was to have the farm, developed a shy and hopeless taciturnity under the pressure of the family chagrin and privations, and found his only relief in the emotions and excitements of Methodism. Sandy seemed at first more fortunate. An opening was found for him at Sheffield, where he was apprenticed to a rope-maker, a cousin of his mother's. This man died before Sandy was more than half-way through his time, and the youth went through a period of hardship and hand-to-mouth living which ended at last in the usual tramp to London. Here, after a period of semi-starvation, he found it impossible to get work at his own trade, and finally drifted into carpentering and cabinet-making. The beginnings of this new line of life were incredibly difficult, owing to the jealousy of his fellow-workmen, who had properly served their time to the trade, and did not see why an interloper from another trade, without qualifications, should be allowed to take the bread out of their mouths. One of Sandy's first successes was in what was called a 'shop-meet-

ing,' a gathering of all the employés of the firm he worked for, before whom the North-countryman pleaded to be allowed to earn his bread. The tall, finely grown, famished-looking lad spoke with a natural eloquence, and here and there with a Biblical force of phrase—the inheritance of his Scotch blood and training—which astonished and melted most of his hearers. He was afterwards let alone, and even taught by the men about him, in return for 'drinks,' which swallowed up sometimes as much as a third of his wages.

After two or three years he was fully master of his trade, an admirable workman, and a keen politician to boot. All this time he had spent his evenings in self-education, buying books with every spare penny, and turning specially to science and mathematics. His abilities presently drew the attention of the heads of the Shoreditch firm for which he worked, and when the post of a foreman in a West-end shop, in which they were largely interested, fell vacant, it was their influence which put Sandy Grieve into the well-paid and coveted post. He could hardly believe his own good fortune. The letter in which he announced it to his father reached the farm just as the last phase of his mother's long martyrdom was developing. The pair, already old —James with work and anxiety, his wife with sickness—read it together. They shut it up without a word. Its tone of jubilant hope seemed to have nothing to do with them, or seemed rather to make their own narrowing prospects look more narrow, and the approach of the King of Terrors more black and relentless, than before. Jenny lay back on her poor bed, with the tears of a dumb self-pity running down her cheeks, and James's only answer to it was conveyed in a brief summons to Sandy to come and see his mother before the end. The prosperous son, broadened out of knowledge almost by good feeding and good clothes, arrived. He brought money, which was accepted without much thanks; but his mother treated him almost as a stranger, and the dour James, while not unwilling to draw out his account of himself, would look him up and down from under his bushy grey eyebrows, and often interpose with some sarcasm on his 'foine' ways of speaking, or his 'gen'leman's cloos.' Sandy was ill at ease. He was really anxious to help, and his heart was touched by his mother's state; but perhaps there was a strain of self-importance in his manner, a half-conscious inclination to thank God that his life was not to be as theirs, which came out in spite of him, and dug a gulf between him and them. Only his brother Reuben, dull, pious, affectionate Reuben, took to him, and showed that patient and wondering admiration of the younger's cleverness, which probably Sandy had reckoned on as his right from his parents also.

On the last evening of his stay—he had luckily been able to make his coming coincide with an Easter three days' holiday—he was sitting beside his mother in the dusk, thinking, with a relief which every now and then roused in him a

pang of shame, that in fourteen or fifteen more hours he should be back in London, in the world which made much of him and knew what a smart fellow he was, when his mother opened her eyes—so wide and blue they looked in her pinched, death-stricken face—and looked at him full.

'Sandy!'

'Yes, mother!' he said, startled—for he had been sunk in his own thoughts—and laying his hand on hers.

'You should get a wife, Sandy.'

'Well, some day, mother, I suppose I shall,' he said, with a change of expression which the twilight concealed.

She was silent a minute, then she began again, slow and feebly, but with a strange clearness of articulation.

'If she's sick, Sandy, *doan't grudge it her*. Women 'ud die fasster iv they could.'

The whole story of the slow consuming bitterness of years spoke through those fixed and filmy eyes. Her son gave a sudden irrepressible sob. There was a faint lightening in the little wrinkled face, and the lips made a movement. He kissed her, and in that last moment of consciousness the mother almost forgave him his good clothes and his superior airs.

Poor Sandy! Looking to his after story, it seems strange that any one should ever have felt him unbearably prosperous. About six months after his mother's death he married a milliner's assistant, whom he met first in the pit of a theatre, and whom he was already courting when his mother gave him the advice recorded. She was French, from the neighbourhood of Arles, and of course a Catholic. She had come to London originally as lady's-maid to a Russian family settled at Nice. Shortly after their arrival, her master shot his young wife for a supposed intrigue, and then put an end to himself. Naturally the whole establishment was scattered, and the pretty Louise Suveret found herself alone, with a few pounds, in London. Thanks to the kind offices of the book-keeper in the hotel where they had been staying, she had been introduced to a milliner of repute in the Bond Street region, and the results of a trial given her, in which her natural Frenchwoman's gift and her acquired skill came out triumphant, led to her being permanently engaged. Thenceforward her good spirits—which had been temporarily depressed, not so much by her mistress's tragic ending as by her own unexpected discomfort—reappeared in all their native exuberance, and she proceeded to enjoy London. She defended herself first against the friendly book-keeper, who became troublesome, and had to be treated with the most decided ingratitude. Then she gradually built herself up a store of clothes of the utmost elegance, which were the hopeless envy of the other girls employed at Madame Catherine's. And, finally, she looked about for serviceable acquaintances.

One night, in the pit of Drury Lane Theatre, while 'The Lady of Lyons' was going on, Sandy Grieve found himself next to a

dazzling creature, with fine black eyes, the smooth olive skin of the South, white teeth, and small dimpled hands, hardly spoilt at all by her trade. She had with her a plain girl-companion, and her manner, though conscious and provocative, had that haughtiness, that implied readiness to take offence, which is the *grisette's* substitute for breeding. She was, however, affable to Sandy, whose broad shoulders and handsome, well-to-do air attracted her attention. She allowed him to get her a programme, to beguile her into conversation, and, finally, to offer her a cup of coffee. Afterwards he escorted the two to the door of their lodging, in one of the streets off Theobald's Road, and walked home in a state of excitement which astonished him.

This happened immediately before his visit to the farm and his mother's death. During the six months after that event Sandy knew the 'joy of eventful living.' He was establishing his own business position, and he was courting Louise Suveret with alternations of despair and flattered passion, which stirred the now burly, full-blooded North-countryman to his depths. She let him escort her to her work in the morning and take her home in the evening, and she allowed him to give her as many presents of gloves, ribbons, bonbons—for which last she had a childish passion—and the like, as he pleased. But when he pressed her to marry him she generally laughed at him. She was, in reality, observing her world, calculating her chances, and she had several other strings to her bow, as Sandy shrewdly suspected, though she never allowed his jealousy any information to feed upon. It was simply owing to the failure of the most promising of these other strings—a failure which roused in Louise one of those white heats of passion which made the chief flaw in her organisation, viewed as a pleasure-procuring machine—that Sandy found his opportunity. In a moment of mortal chagrin and outraged vanity she consented to marry him, and three weeks afterwards he was the blissful owner of the black eyes, the small hands, the quick tongue, and the seductive *chiffons* he had so long admired more or less at a distance.

Their marriage lasted six years. At first Louise found some pleasure in arranging the little house Sandy had taken for her in a new suburb, and in making, wearing, and altering the additional gowns which their joint earnings—for she still worked intermittently at her trade—allowed her to enjoy. After the first infatuation was a little cooled, Sandy discovered in her a paganism so unblushing that his own Scotch and Puritan instincts reacted in a sort of superstitious fear. It seemed impossible that God Almighty should long allow Himself to be flouted as Louise flouted Him. He found also that the sense of truth was almost non-existent in her, and her vanity, her greed of dress and admiration, was so consuming, so frenzied, that his only hope of a peaceful life—as he quickly realised—lay in ministering to it. Her will soon got the upper hand, and he sank into the patient servant of her pleasures, snatching feverishly at all

she gave him in return with the instinct of a man who, having sold his soul, is determined at least to get the last farthing he can of the price.

They had two children in four years—David Suveret and Louise Stephanie. Louise resented the advent of the second so intensely that poor Sandy become conscious, before the child appeared, of a fatal and appalling change in her relation to him. She had been proud of her first-born—an unusually handsome and precocious child—and had taken pleasure in dressing it and parading it before the eyes of the other mothers in their terrace, all of whom she passionately despised. But Louie nearly died of neglect, and the two years that followed her birth were black indeed for Sandy. His wife, he knew, had begun to hate him; in business his energies failed him, and his employers cooled towards him as he grew visibly less pushing and inventive. The little household got deeper and deeper into debt, and towards the end of the time Louise would sometimes spend the whole day away from home without a word of explanation. So great was his nervous terror—strong, broad fellow that he was—of that pent-up fury in her, which a touch might have unloosed, that he never questioned her. At last the inevitable end came. He got home one summer evening to find the house empty and ransacked, the children—little things of five and two—sitting crying in the desolate kitchen, and a crowd of loud-voiced, indignant neighbours round the door. To look for her would have been absurd. Louise was much too clever to disappear and leave traces behind. Besides, he had no wish to find her. The hereditary self in him accepted his disaster as representing the natural retribution which the canny Divine vengeance keeps in store for those who take to themselves wives of the daughters of Heth. And there was the sense, too, of emerging from something unclean, of recovering his manhood.

He took his two children and went to lodgings in a decent street near the Gray's Inn Road. There for a year things went fairly well with him. His boy and girl, whom he paid a neighbour to look after during the day, made something to come home to. As he helped the boy, who was already at school, with his lesson for the next day, or fed Louie, perched on his knee, with the bits from his plate demanded by her covetous eyes and open mouth, he got back, little by little, his self-respect. He returned, too, in the evenings to some of his old pursuits, joined a Radical club near, and some science lectures. He was aged and much more silent than of yore, but not unhappy; his employers, too, feeling that their man had somehow recovered himself, and hearing something of his history, were sorry for him, and showed it.

Then one autumn evening a constable knocked at his door, and, coming in upon the astonished group of father and children, produced from his pocket a soaked and tattered letter, and showing Sandy the address, asked if it was for him. Sandy, on seeing it, stood up, put down Louie, who, half undressed, had been

having a ride on his knee, and asked his visitor to come out on to the landing. There he read the letter under the gas-lamp, and put it deliberately into his pocket.

'Where is she?' he asked.

'In Lambeth mortuary,' said the man briefly—'picked up two hours ago. Nothing else found on her but this.'

Half an hour afterwards Sandy stood by a slab in the mortuary, and, drawing back a sheet which covered the burden on it, stood face to face with his dead wife. The black brows were drawn, the small hands clenched. What struck Sandy with peculiar horror was that one delicate wrist was broken, having probably struck something in falling. She—who in life had rebelled so hotly against the least shadow of physical pain! Thanks to the bandage which had been passed round it, the face was not much altered. She could not have been long in the water. Probably about the time when he was walking home from work, she—— He felt himself suffocating—the bare whitewashed walls grew dim and wavering.

The letter found upon her was the strangest appeal to his pity. Her seducer had apparently left her; she was in dire straits, and there was, it seemed, no one but Sandy in all London on whose compassion she could throw herself. She asked him, callously, for money to take her back to some Nice relations. They need only know what she chose to tell them, as she calmly pointed out, and, once in Nice, she could make a living. She would like to see her children, she said, before she left, but she supposed he would have to settle that. How had she got his address? From his place of business probably, in some roundabout way.

Then what had happened? Had she been seized with a sudden persuasion that he would not answer, that it was all useless trouble; and in one of those accesses of blind rage by which her clear, sharp brain-life was at all times apt to be disturbed, had she rushed out to end it all at once and for ever? It made him forgive her that she *could* have destroyed herself—could have faced that awful plunge—that icy water—that death-struggle for breath. He gauged the misery she must have gone through by what he knew of her sensuous love for comfort, for *bien-être*. He saw her again as she had been that night at the theatre when they first met,—the little crisp black curls on the temples, the dazzling eyes, the artificial pearls round the neck, the slight traces of powder and rouge on brow and cheek, which made her all the more attractive and tempting to his man's eye—the pretty foot, which he first noticed as she stepped from the threshold of the theatre into the street. Nature had made all that, to bring her work to this grim bed at last!

He himself died eighteen months afterwards. His acquaintances never dreamt of connecting his death with his wife's, and the connection, if it existed, would have been difficult to trace. Still, if little David could have put his experiences at this time into words, they might have thrown some light on an event which

was certainly a surprise to the small world which took an interest in Sandy Grieve.

There was a certain sound which remained all through his life firmly fixed in David's memory, and which he never thought of without a sense of desolation, a shiver of sick dismay, such as belonged to no other association whatever. It was the sound of a long sigh, brought up, as it seemed, from the very depths of being, and often, often repeated. The thought of it brought with it a vision of a small bare room at night, with two iron bedsteads, one for Louie, one for himself and his father; a bit of smouldering fire in a tiny grate, and beside it a man's figure bowed over the warmth, thrown out dark against the distempered wall, and sitting on there hour after hour; of a child, wakened intermittently by the light, and tormented by the recurrent sound, till it had once more burrowed into the bed-clothes deep enough to shut out everything but sleep. All these memories belonged to the time immediately following on Louise's suicide. Probably, during the interval between his wife's death and his own, Sandy suffered severely from the effects of strong nervous shock, coupled with a certain growth of religious melancholy, the conditions for which are rarely wanting in the true Calvinist blood. Owing to the privations and exposure of his early manhood, too, it is possible that he was never in reality the strong man he looked. At any rate, his fight for his life when it came was a singularly weak one. The second winter after Louise's death was bitterly cold; he was overworked, and often without sleep. One bleak east-wind day struck home. He took to his bed with a chill, which turned to peritonitis; the system showed no power of resistance, and he died.

On the day but one before he died, when the mortal pain was gone, but death was absolutely certain, he sent post-haste for his brother Reuben. Reuben he believed was married to a decent woman, and to Reuben he meant to commend his children.

Reuben arrived, looking more bewildered and stupid than ever, pure countryman that he was, in this London which he had never seen. Sandy looked at him with a deep inward dissatisfaction. But what could he do? His marriage had cut him off from his old friends, and since its wreck he had had no energy wherewith to make new ones.

'I've never seen your wife, Reuben,' he said, when they had talked awhile.

Reuben was silent a minute, apparently collecting his thoughts.

'Naw,' he said at last; 'naw. She sent yo her luve, and she hopes iv it's the Lord's will to tak yo, that it ull foind yo prepared.'

He said it like a lesson. A sort of nervous tremor and shrinking overspread Sandy's face. He had suffered so much through religion during the last few months, that in this final moment of humanity the soul had taken refuge in numbness—apathy. Let

God decide. He could think it out no more; and in this utter feebleness his terror of hell—the ineradicable deposit of childhood and inheritance—had passed away. He gathered his forces for the few human and practical things which remained to him to do.

'Did she get on comfortable with father?' he asked, fixing Reuben with his eyes, which had the penetration of death.

Reuben looked discomposed, and cleared his throat once or twice.

'Wal, it warn't what yo may call just coomfortable atween 'em. Naw, I'll not say it wor.'

'What was wrong?' demanded Sandy.

Reuben fidgeted.

'Wal,' he said at last, throwing up his head in desperation, 'I spose a woman likes her house to hersel when she's fust married. He wor childish like, an mighty trooblesome times. An she's allus stirrin, and rootin, is Hannah. Udder foak mus look aloive too.'

The conflict in Reuben's mind between his innate truthfulness and his desire to excuse his wife was curious to see. Sandy had a vision of his father sitting in his dotage by his own hearth, and ministered to by a daughter-in-law who grudged him his years and his infirmities, as he had grudged his wife all the troublesome incidents of her long decay. But it only affected him now as it bore upon what was still living in him, the one feeling which still survived amid the wreck made by circumstance and disease.

'Will she be kind to *them?*' he said sharply, with a motion of the head towards the children, first towards David, who sat drooping on his father's bed, where for some ten or twelve hours now he had remained glued, refusing to touch either breakfast or dinner, and then towards Louie, who was on the floor by the fire, with her rag dolls, which she was dressing up with smiles and chatter in a strange variety of finery. 'If not, she shan't have 'em. There's time yet.'

But the grey hue was already on his cheek, his feet were already cold. The nurse in the far corner of the room, looking up as he spoke, gave him mentally 'an hour or two.'

Reuben flushed and sat bolt upright, his gnarled and wrinkled hands trembling on his knees.

'She *shall* be kind to 'em,' he said with energy. 'Gie 'em to us, Sandy. Yo wouldna send your childer to strangers?'

The clannish instinct in Sandy responded. Besides, in spite of his last assertion, he knew very well there was nothing else to be done.

'There's money,' he said slowly. 'She'll not need to stint them of anything. This is a poor place,' for at the word 'money' he noticed that Reuben's eyes travelled with an awakening shrewdness over the barely furnished room; 'but it was the debts first, and then I had to put by for the children. None of the shop-folk

or the fellows at the club ever came here. We lived as we liked. There's an insurance, and there's some savings, and there's some commission money owing from the firm, and there's a bit investment Mr. Gurney (naming the head partner) helped me into last year. There's altogether about six hundred pound. You'll get the interest of it for the children; it'll go into Gurneys', and they'll give five per cent. for it. Mr. Gurney's been very kind. He came here yesterday, and he's got it all. You go to him.'

He stopped for weakness. Reuben's eyes were round. Six hundred pounds! Who'd have thought it of Sandy?—after that bad lot of a wife, and he not thirty!

'An what d' yo want Davy to be, Sandy?'

'You must settle,' said the father, with a long sigh. 'Depends on him—what he turns to. If he wants to farm, he can learn with you, and put in his money when he sees an opening. For the bit farms in our part there'd be enough. But I'm feeart' (the old Derbyshire word slipped out unawares) 'he'll not stay in the country. He's too sharp, and you mustn't force him. If you see he's not the farming sort, when he's thirteen or fourteen or so, take Mr. Gurney's advice, and bind him to a trade. Mr. Gurney 'll pay the premiums for him and he can have the balance of the money—for I've left him to manage it all, for himself and Louie too—when he's fit to set up for himself.—You and Hannah 'll deal honest wi 'em?'

The question was unexpected, and as he put it with a startling energy the dying man raised himself on his elbow, and looked sharply at his brother.

'D' yo think I'd cheat yo, or your childer, Sandy?' cried Reuben, flushing and pricked to the heart.

Sandy sank back again, his sudden qualm appeased. 'No,' he said, his thoughts returning painfully to his son. 'I'm feeart he'll not stay wi you. He's cleverer than I ever was, and I was the cleverest of us all.'

The words had in them a whole epic of human fate. Under the prick of them Reuben found a tongue, not now for his wife, but for himself.

'It's not cliverness as ull help yo now, Sandy, wi your Mäaker! and yo feeace t' feeace wi 'un!' he cried. 'It's nowt but satisfacshun by t' blood o' Jesus!'

Sandy made no answer, unless, indeed, the poor heart within made its last cry of agony to heaven at the words. The sinews of the spiritual as well as the physical man were all spent and useless.

'Davy,' he called presently. The child, who had been sitting motionless during this talk watching his father, slid along the bed with alacrity, and tucking his little legs and feet well away from Sandy's long frame, put his head down on the pillow. His father turned his eyes to him, and with a solemn, lingering gaze took in the childish face, the thick, tumbled hair, the expression, so piteous, yet so intelligent. Then he put up his own large hand,

and took both the boy's into its cold and feeble grasp. His eyelids fell, and the breathing changed. The nurse hurriedly rose, lifted up Louie from her toys, and put her on the bed beside him. The child, disturbed in her play and frightened by she knew not what, set up a sudden cry. A tremor seemed to pass through the shut lids at the sound, a slight compression of pain appeared in the grey lips. It was Sandy Grieve's last sign of life.

Reuben Grieve remembered well the letter he had written to his wife, with infinite difficulty, from beside his brother's dead body. He told her that he was bringing the children back with him. The poor bairns had got nobody in the world to look to but their uncle and aunt. And they would not cost Hannah a penny. For Mr. Gurney would pay thirty pounds a year for their keep and bringing up.

With what care and labour his clumsy fingers had penned that last sentence so that Hannah might read it plain!

Afterwards he brought the children home. As he drove his light cart up the rough and lonely road to Needham Farm, Louie cried with the cold and the dark, and Davy, with his hands tucked between his knees, grew ever more and more silent, his restless little head turning perpetually from side to side, as though he were trying to discover something of the strange, new world to which he had been brought, through the gloom of the February evening.

Then at the sound of wheels outside in the lane, the back door of the farm was opened, and a dark figure stood on the threshold.

'Yo're late,' Reuben heard. It was Hannah's piercing voice that spoke. 'Bring 'em into t' back kitchen, an let 'em take their shoes off afore they coom ony further.'

By which Reuben knew that it had been scrubbing-day, and that her flagstones were more in Hannah's mind than the guests he had brought her. He obeyed, and then the barefooted trio entered the front kitchen together. Hannah came forward and looked at the children—at David white and blinking—at the four-year-old Louie, bundled up in an old shawl, which dragged on the ground behind her, and staring wildly round her at the old low-roofed kitchen with the terror of the trapped bird.

'Hannah, they're varra cold,' said Reuben—'ha yo got summat hot?'

'Theer'll be supper bime-by,' Hannah replied with decision. 'I've naw time scrubbin-days to be foolin about wi things out o' hours. I've nobbut just got straight and cleaned mysel. They can sit down and warm theirsels. I conno say they feature ony of *yor* belongins, Reuben.' And she went to put Louie on the settle by the fire. But as the tall woman in black approached her, the child hit out madly with her small fists and burst into a loud howl of crying.

'Get away, nasty woman! *Nasty* woman—ugly woman! Take me away—I want my daddy,—I want my daddy.'

And she threw herself kicking on the floor, while, to Hannah's exasperation, a piece of crumbling bun she had been holding tight in her sticky little hand escaped and littered all the new-washed stones.

'Tak yor niece oop, Reuben, an mak her behave'—the mistress of the house commanded angrily. 'She'll want a stick takken to her, soon, *I* can see.'

Reuben obeyed so far as he could, but Louie's shrieks only ceased when, by the combined efforts of husband and wife, she had been put to bed, so exhausted with rage, excitement, and the journey, that sleep mercifully took possession of her just after she had performed the crowning feat of knocking the tea and bread and butter Reuben brought her out of her uncle's hand and all over the room.

Meanwhile, David sat perfectly still in a chair against the wall, beside the old clock, and stared about him; at the hams and bunches of dried herbs hanging from the ceiling; at the chiffonnier, with its red baize doors under a brass trellis-work; at the high wooden settle, the framed funeral cards, and the two or three coloured prints, now brown with age, which Reuben had hung up twenty years before, to celebrate his marriage. Hannah was propitiated by the boy's silence, and as she got supper ready she once or twice noticed his fine black eyes and his curly hair.

'Yo can coom an get yor supper,' she said to him, more graciously than she had spoken yet. 'It's a mussy yo doant goo skrikin like your sister.'

'Thank you, ma'am,' said the little fellow, with a townsman's politeness, hardly understanding, however, a word of her north-country dialect—'I'm not hungry.—You've got a picture of General Washington there, ma'am;' and, raising a small hand trembling with nervousness and fatigue, he pointed to one of the prints opposite.

'Wal, I niver,' said Hannah, with a stare of astonishment. 'Yo're a quare lot—the two o' yer.'

One thing more Reuben remembered with some vividness in connection with the children's arrival. When they were both at last asleep—Louie in an unused room at the back, on an old wooden bedstead, which stood solitary in a wilderness of bare boards; David in a sort of cupboard off the landing, which got most of its light and air from a wooden trellis-work, overlooking the staircase—Hannah said abruptly to her husband, as they two were going to bed, 'When ull Mr. Gurney pay that money?'

'Twice a year—so his clerk towd me—Christmas an Midsummer. Praps we shan't want to use it aw, Hannah; praps we might save soom on it for t' childer. Their keep, iv yo feed em on parritch, is nobbut a fleabite, an they'n got a good stock o' cloos, Sandy's nurse towd me.'

He looked anxiously at Hannah. In his inmost heart there was a passionate wish to do his duty to Sandy's orphans, fighting

with a dread of his wife, which was the fruit of long habit and constitutional weakness.

Hannah faced round upon him. It was Reuben's misfortune that dignity was at all times impossible to him. Now, as he sat in his shirt-sleeves and stocking-feet, flushed with the exertion of pulling off his heavy boots, the light of the tallow candle falling on his weak eyes with their red rims, on his large open mouth with the conspicuous gap in its front teeth, and his stubby hair, he was more than usually grotesque. 'As slamp an wobbly as an owd corn-boggart,' so his neighbours described him when they wished to be disrespectful, and the simile fitted very closely with the dishevelled, disjointed appearance which was at all times characteristic of him, Sundays or weekdays. No one studying the pair, especially at such a moment as this—the *malaise* of the husband—the wife towering above him, her grey hair hanging loose round her black brows and sallow face instinct with a rugged and indomitable energy—could have doubted in whose hands lay the government of Needham Farm.

'I'll thank yo not to talk nonsense, Reuben Grieve,' said his wife sharply. 'D'yo think they're *my* flesh an blood, thoose childer? An who'll ha to do for 'em but me, I should loike to know? Who'll ha to put up wi their messin an their dirt but *me?* Twenty year ha yo an I been married, Reuben, an niver till this neet did I ha to goo down on my knees an sweep oop after scrubbin-day! Iv I'm to be moidered wi em, I'll be paid for 't. Soa I let yo know—it's little enough.'

And Hannah took her payment. As he sat in the sun, looking back on the last seven years, with a slow and dreaming mind, Reuben recognised, using his own phrases for the matter, that the children's thirty pounds had been the pivot of Hannah's existence. He was but a small sheep farmer, with very scanty capital. By dint of hard work and painful thrift, the childless pair had earned a sufficient living in the past—nay, even put by a bit, if the truth of Hannah's savings-bank deposits were known. But every fluctuation in their small profits tried them sorely—tried Hannah especially, whose temper was of the brooding and grasping order. The *certainty* of Mr. Gurney's cheques made them very soon the most cheerful facts in the farm life. On two days in the year—the 20th of June and the 20th of December—Reuben might be sure of finding his wife in a good temper, and he had long shrewdly suspected, without inquiring, that Hannah's savings-bank book, since the children came, had been very pleasant reading to her.

Reuben fidgeted uncomfortably as he thought of those savings. Certainly the children had not cost what was paid for them. He began to be oddly exercised this Sunday morning on the subject of the porridge Louie hated so much. Was it his fault or Hannah's if the frugal living which had been the rule for all the remoter farms of the Peak—nay, for the whole north country—

And she threw herself kicking on the floor, while, to Hannah's exasperation, a piece of crumbling bun she had been holding tight in her sticky little hand escaped and littered all the new-washed stones.

'Tak yor niece oop, Reuben, an mak her behave'—the mistress of the house commanded angrily. 'She'll want a stick takken to her, soon, *I* can see.'

Reuben obeyed so far as he could, but Louie's shrieks only ceased when, by the combined efforts of husband and wife, she had been put to bed, so exhausted with rage, excitement, and the journey, that sleep mercifully took possession of her just after she had performed the crowning feat of knocking the tea and bread and butter Reuben brought her out of her uncle's hand and all over the room.

Meanwhile, David sat perfectly still in a chair against the wall, beside the old clock, and stared about him; at the hams and bunches of dried herbs hanging from the ceiling; at the chiffonnier, with its red baize doors under a brass trellis-work; at the high wooden settle, the framed funeral cards, and the two or three coloured prints, now brown with age, which Reuben had hung up twenty years before, to celebrate his marriage. Hannah was propitiated by the boy's silence, and as she got supper ready she once or twice noticed his fine black eyes and his curly hair.

'Yo can coom an get yor supper,' she said to him, more graciously than she had spoken yet. 'It's a mussy yo doant goo skrikin like your sister.'

'Thank you, ma'am,' said the little fellow, with a townsman's politeness, hardly understanding, however, a word of her north-country dialect—'I'm not hungry.—You've got a picture of General Washington there, ma'am;' and, raising a small hand trembling with nervousness and fatigue, he pointed to one of the prints opposite.

'Wal, I niver,' said Hannah, with a stare of astonishment. 'Yo're a quare lot—the two o' yer.'

One thing more Reuben remembered with some vividness in connection with the children's arrival. When they were both at last asleep—Louie in an unused room at the back, on an old wooden bedstead, which stood solitary in a wilderness of bare boards; David in a sort of cupboard off the landing, which got most of its light and air from a wooden trellis-work, overlooking the staircase—Hannah said abruptly to her husband, as they two were going to bed, 'When ull Mr. Gurney pay that money?'

'Twice a year—so his clerk towd me—Christmas an Midsummer. Praps we shan't want to use it aw, Hannah; praps we might save soom on it for t' childer. Their keep, iv yo feed em on parritch, is nobbut a fleabite, an they'n got a good stock o' cloos, Sandy's nurse towd me.'

He looked anxiously at Hannah. In his inmost heart there was a passionate wish to do his duty to Sandy's orphans, fighting

with a dread of his wife, which was the fruit of long habit and constitutional weakness.

Hannah faced round upon him. It was Reuben's misfortune that dignity was at all times impossible to him. Now, as he sat in his shirt-sleeves and stocking-feet, flushed with the exertion of pulling off his heavy boots, the light of the tallow candle falling on his weak eyes with their red rims, on his large open mouth with the conspicuous gap in its front teeth, and his stubby hair, he was more than usually grotesque. 'As slamp an wobbly as an owd corn-boggart,' so his neighbours described him when they wished to be disrespectful, and the simile fitted very closely with the dishevelled, disjointed appearance which was at all times characteristic of him, Sundays or weekdays. No one studying the pair, especially at such a moment as this—the *malaise* of the husband—the wife towering above him, her grey hair hanging loose round her black brows and sallow face instinct with a rugged and indomitable energy—could have doubted in whose hands lay the government of Needham Farm.

'I'll thank yo not to talk nonsense, Reuben Grieve,' said his wife sharply. 'D'yo think they're *my* flesh an blood, thoose childer? An who'll ha to do for 'em but me, I should loike to know? Who'll ha to put up wi their messin an their dirt but *me?* Twenty year ha yo an I been married, Reuben, an niver till this neet did I ha to goo down on my knees an sweep oop after scrubbin-day! Iv I'm to be moidered wi em, I'll be paid for 't. Soa I let yo know—it's little enough.'

And Hannah took her payment. As he sat in the sun, looking back on the last seven years, with a slow and dreaming mind, Reuben recognised, using his own phrases for the matter, that the children's thirty pounds had been the pivot of Hannah's existence. He was but a small sheep farmer, with very scanty capital. By dint of hard work and painful thrift, the childless pair had earned a sufficient living in the past—nay, even put by a bit, if the truth of Hannah's savings-bank deposits were known. But every fluctuation in their small profits tried them sorely—tried Hannah especially, whose temper was of the brooding and grasping order. The *certainty* of Mr. Gurney's cheques made them very soon the most cheerful facts in the farm life. On two days in the year—the 20th of June and the 20th of December—Reuben might be sure of finding his wife in a good temper, and he had long shrewdly suspected, without inquiring, that Hannah's savings-bank book, since the children came, had been very pleasant reading to her.

Reuben fidgeted uncomfortably as he thought of those savings. Certainly the children had not cost what was paid for them. He began to be oddly exercised this Sunday morning on the subject of the porridge Louie hated so much. Was it his fault or Hannah's if the frugal living which had been the rule for all the remoter farms of the Peak—nay, for the whole north country—

in his father's time, and had been made doubly binding, as it were, on the dwellers in Needham Farm by James Grieve's Scotch blood and habits, had survived under their roof, while all about them a more luxurious standard of food and comfort was beginning to obtain among their neighbours? Where could you find a finer set of men than the Berwickshire hinds, of whom his father came, and who were reared on 'parritch' from year's end to year's end?

And yet, all the same, Reuben's memory was full this morning of disturbing pictures of a little London child, full of town daintiness and accustomed to the spoiling of an indulgent father, crying herself into fits over the new unpalatable food, refusing it day after day, till the sharp, wilful face had grown pale and pinched with famine, and caring no more apparently for her aunt's beatings than she did for the clumsy advances by which her uncle would sometimes try to propitiate her. There had been a great deal of beating—whenever Reuben thought of it he had a superstitious way of putting Sandy out of his mind as much as possible. Many times he had gone far away from the house to avoid the sound of the blows and shrieks he was powerless to stop.

Well, but what harm had come of it all? Louie was a strong lass now, if she were a bit thin and overgrown. David was as fine a boy as anyone need wish to see.

David?

Reuben got up from his seat at the farm door, took his pipe out of his pocket, and went to hang over the garden-gate, that he might unravel some very worrying thoughts at a greater distance from Hannah.

The day before he had been overtaken coming out of Clough End by Mr. Ancrum, the lame minister. He and Grieve liked one another. If there had been intrigues raised against the minister within the 'Christian Brethren' congregation, Reuben Grieve had taken no part in them.

After some general conversation, Mr. Ancrum suddenly said, 'Will you let me have a word with you, Mr. Grieve, about your nephew David—if you'll not think me intruding?'

'Say on, sir—say on,' said Reuben hastily, but with an inward shrinking.

'Well, Mr. Grieve, you've got a remarkable boy there—a curious and remarkable boy. What are you going to do with him?'

'Do wi him?—me, sir? Wal, I doan't know as I've iver thowt mich about it,' said Reuben, but with an agitation of manner that struck his interrogator. 'He be varra useful to me on t' farm, Mr. Ancrum. Soom toimes i' t' year theer's a lot doin, yo knaw, sir, even on a bit place like ours, and he ha gitten a good schoolin, he ha.'

The apologetic incoherence of the little speech was curious Mr. Ancrum did not exactly know how to take his man.

'I dare say he's useful. But he's not going to be the ordinary labourer, Mr. Grieve—he's made of quite different stuff, and,

if I may say so, it will pay you very well to recognise it in good time. That boy will read books now which hardly any grown man of his class—about here, at any rate—would be able to read. Aye, and talk about them, too, in a way to astonish you!'

'Yes, I know 'at he's oncommon cliver wi his books, is Davy,' Reuben admitted.

'Oh! it's not only that. But he's got an unusual brain and a wonderful memory. And it would be a thousand pities if he were to make nothing of them. You say he's useful, but—excuse me, Mr. Grieve—he seems to me to spend three parts of his time in loafing and desultory reading. He wants more teaching—he wants steady training. Why don't you send him to Manchester,' said the minister boldly, 'and apprentice him? It costs money, no doubt.'

And he looked interrogatively at Reuben. Reuben, however, said nothing. They were toiling up the steep road from Clough End to the high farms under the Scout, a road which tried the minister's infirm limb severely; otherwise he would have taken more notice of his companion's awkward flush and evident discomposure.

'But it would pay you in the long run,' he said, when they stopped to take breath; 'it would be a capital investment if the boy lives, I promise you that, Mr. Grieve. And he could carry on his education there, too, a bit—what with evening classes and lectures, and the different libraries he could get the use of. It's wonderful how all the facilities for working-class education have grown in Manchester during the last few years.'

'Aye, sir—I spose they have—I spose they have,' said Reuben, uncomfortably, and then seemed incapable of carrying on the conversation any further. Mr. Ancrum talked, but nothing more was to be got out of the farmer. At last the minister turned back, saying, as he shook hands, 'Well, let me know if I can be of any use. I have a good many friends in Manchester. I tell you that's a boy to be proud of, Mr. Grieve, a boy of promise, if ever there was one. But he wants taking the right way. He's got plenty of mixed stuff in him, bad and good. I should feel it anxious work, the next few years, if he were my boy.'

Now it was really this talk which was fermenting in Reuben, and which, together with the 'rumpus' between Hannah and Louie, had led to his singularly disturbed state of conscience this Sunday morning. As he stood, miserably pulling at his pipe, the whole prospect of sloping field, and steep distant moor, gradually vanished from his eyes, and, instead, he saw the same London room which David's memory held so tenaciously—he saw Sandy raising himself from his deathbed with that look of sudden distrust—'Now, you'll deal honest wi 'em, Reuben?'

Reuben groaned in spirit. 'A boy to be proud of' indeed. It seemed to him, now that he was perforce made to think about it, that he had never been easy in his mind since Sandy's orphans came to the house. On the one hand, his wife had had her way

—how was he to prevent it? On the other, his religious sense had kept pricking and tormenting—like the gadfly that it was.

Who, in the name of fortune, was to ask Hannah for money to send the boy to Manchester and apprentice him? And who was going to write to Mr. Gurney about it without her leave? Once upset the system of things on which those two half-yearly cheques depended, how many more of them would be forthcoming? And how was Hannah going to put up with the loss of them? It made Reuben shiver to think of it.

Shouts from the lane behind. Reuben suddenly raised himself and made for the gate at the corner of the farmyard. He came out upon the children, who had been to Sunday school at Clough End since dinner, and were now in consequence in a state of restless animal spirits. Louie was swinging violently on the gate which barred the path on to the moor. David was shying stones at a rook's nest opposite, the clatter of the outraged colony to which it belonged sounding as music in his ears.

They stared when they saw Reuben cross the road, sit down on a stone beside David, and take out his pipe. David ceased throwing, and Louie, crossing her feet and steadying herself as she sat on the topmost bar of the gate by a grip on either side, leant hard on her hands and watched her uncle in silence. When caught unawares by their elders, these two had always something of the air of captives defending themselves in an alien country.

'Wal, Davy, did tha have Mr. Ancrum in school?' began Reuben, affecting a brisk manner, oddly unlike him.

'Naw. It wor Brother Winterbotham from Halifax, or soom sich name.'

'Wor he edifyin, Davy?'

'He wor—he wor—a leather-yed,' said David, with sudden energy, and, taking up a stone again, he flung it at a tree trunk opposite, with a certain vindictiveness as though Brother Winterbotham were sitting there.

'Now, yo're not speakin as yo owt, Davy,' said Reuben reprovingly, as he puffed away at his pipe and felt the pleasantness of the spring sunshine which streamed down into the lane through the still bare but budding branches of the sycamores.

'He *wor* a leather-yed,' David repeated with emphasis. 'He said it wor Alexander fought t' battle o' Marathon.'

Reuben was silent for a while. When tests of this kind were going, he could but lie low. However, David's answer, after a bit, suggested an opening to him.

'Yo've a rare deal o' book-larnin for a farmin lad, Davy. If yo wor at a trade now, or a mill-hand, or summat o' that soart, yo'd ha noan so mich time for readin as yo ha now.'

The boy looked at him askance, with his keen black eyes. His uncle puzzled him.

'Wal, I'm not a mill-hand, onyways,' he said, shortly, 'an I doan't mean to be.'

'Noa, yo're too lazy,' said Louie shrilly, from the top of the gate. 'Theer's heaps o' boys no bigger nor yo, arns their ten shillins a week.'

'They're welcome,' said David laconically, throwing another stone at the water to keep his hand in. For some years now the boy had cherished a hatred of the mill-life on which Clough End and the other small towns and villages in the neighbourhood existed. The thought of the long monotonous hours at the mules or the looms was odious to the lad whose joys lay in free moorland wanderings with the sheep, in endless reading, in talks with 'Lias Dawson.

'Wal, now, I'm real glad to heer yo say sich things, Davy, lad,' said Reuben, with a curious flutter of manner. 'I'm real glad. So yo take to the farmin, Davy? Wal, it's nateral. All yor forbears—all on em leastways, nobbut yor feyther—got their livin off t' land. It cooms nateral to a Grieve.'

The boy made no answer—did not commit himself in any way. He went on absently throwing stones.

'Why doan't he larn a trade?' demanded Louie. 'Theer's Harry Wigson, he's gone to Manchester to be prenticed. He doan't goo loafin round aw day.'

Her sharp wits disconcerted Reuben. He looked anxiously at David. The boy coloured furiously, and cast an angry glance at his sister.

'Theer's money wanted for prenticin,' he said shortly.

Reuben felt a stab. Neither of the children knew that they possessed a penny. A blunt word of Hannah's first of all, about 'not gien 'em ony high noshuns o' theirsels,' aided on Reuben's side by the natural secretiveness of the peasant in money affairs, had effectually concealed all knowledge of their own share in the family finances from the orphans.

He reached out a soil-stained hand, shaking already with incipient age, and laid it on David's sleeve.

'Art tha hankerin after a trade, lad?' he said hastily, nay, harshly.

David looked at his uncle astonished. A hundred thoughts flew through the boy's mind. Then he raised his head and caught sight of the great peak of Kinder Low in the distance, beyond the green swells of meadowland,—the heathery slopes running up into its rocky breast,—the black patch on the brown, to the left, which marked the site of the smithy.

'No,' he said decidedly. 'No; I can't say as I am. I like t' farmin well enough.'

And then, boy-like, hating to be talked to about himself, he shook himself free of his uncle and walked away. Reuben fell to his pipe again with a beaming countenance.

'Louie, my gell,' he said.

'Yes,' said the child, not moving.

'Coom yo heer, Louie.'

She unwillingly got down and came up to him.

Reuben put down his pipe, and fumbled in his waistcoat pocket. Out of it, with difficulty, he produced a sixpence.

'Art tha partial to goodies, Louie?' he said, dropping his voice almost to a whisper, and holding up the coin before her.

Louie nodded, her eyes glistening at the magnitude of the coin. Uncle Reuben might be counted on for a certain number of pennies during the year, but silver was unheard of.

'Tak it then, child, an welcome. If yo have a sweet tooth—an it's t' way wi moast gells—I conno see as it can be onythin else but Providence as gave it yo. So get yorsel soom bull's-eyes, Louie, an—an'—he looked a little conscious as he slipped the coin into her eager hand—'doan't let on ti your aunt! She'd think mebbe I wor spoilin your teeth, or summat,—an, Louie—'

Was Uncle Reuben gone mad? For the first time in her life, as it seemed to Louie, he was looking at what she had on, nay, was even taking up her dress between his finger and thumb.

'Is thissen your Sunday frock, chilt?'

'Yes,' said the girl, flushing scarlet, 'bean't it a dish-clout?'

And she stood looking down at it with passionate scorn. It was a worn and patched garment of brown alpaca, made out of an ancient gown of Hannah's.

'Wal, I'm naw judge i' these matters,' said Reuben, dubiously, drawing out his spectacles. 'It's got naw holes 'at I can see, but it's not varra smart, perhaps. Satan's varra active wi gells on this pint o' dress—yo mun tak noatice o' that, Louie—but—listen heer—'

And he drew her nearer to him by her skirt, looking cautiously up and down the lane and across to the farm.

'If I get a good price for t' wool this year—an theer's a new merchant coomin round, yan moor o' t' buyin soart nor owd Croker, soa they say, I'st save yo five shillin for a frock, chilt. Yo can goo an buy it, an I'st mak it straight wi yor aunt. But I mun get a good price, yo know, or your aunt ull be fearfu' bad to manage.'

And he gazed up at her as though appealing to her common sense in the matter, and to her understanding of both his and her situation. Louie's cheeks were red, her eyes did not meet his. They looked away, down towards Clough End.

'Theer's a blue cotton at Hinton's,' she said, hurriedly—'a light-blue cotton. They want sixpence farthin,—but Annie Wigson says yo could bate 'em a bit. But what's t' use?' she added, with a sudden savage darkening of her bright look—'she'd tak it away.'

The tone gave Reuben a shock. But he did not rebuke it. For the first time he and Louie were conspirators in the same plot.

'No, no, I'd see to 'at. But how ud yo get it made?' He was beginning to feel a childish interest in his scheme.

'Me an Annie Wigson ud mak it oop fast enough. Theer are

things I can do for her ; she'd not want no payin, an she's fearfu' good at dressmakin. She wor prenticed two years afore she took ill.'

'Gie me a kiss then, my gell ; doan't yo gie naw trooble, an we'st see. But I mun get a good price, yo know.'

And rising, Reuben bent towards his niece. She rose on tiptoe, and just touched his rough cheek. There was no natural childish effusiveness in the action. For the seven years since she left her father, Louie had quite unlearnt kissing.

Reuben proceeded up the lane to the gate leading to the moor. He was in the highest spirits. What a mercy he had not bothered Hannah with Mr. Ancrum's remarks ! Why, the boy wouldn't go to a trade, not if he were sent !

At the gate he ran against David, who came hastily out of the farmyard to intercept him.

'Uncle Reuben, what do they coe that bit watter up theer ?' and he pointed up the lane towards the main ridge of the Peak. 'Yo know—that bit pool on t' way to th' Downfall ?'

The farmer stopped bewildered.

'That bit watter ? What they coe that bit watter ? Why, they coe it t' Witch's Pool, or used to i' my yoong days. An for varra good reason too. They drownded an owd witch theer i' my grandfeyther's time—I've heerd my grandmither tell th' tale on't scores o' times. An theer's aw mak o' tales about it, or used to be. I hannot yeerd mony words about it o' late years. Who's been talkin to yo, Davy ?'

Louie came running up and listened.

'I doan't know,' said the boy,—' what soart o' tales ?'

'Why, they'd use to say th' witch walked, on soom neets i' th' year—Easter Eve, most pertickerlerly—an foak wor feeart to goo onywhere near it on those neets. But doan't yo goo listenin to tales, Davy,' said Reuben, with a paternal effusion most rare with him, and born of his recent proceedings ; 'yo'll only freeten yorsel o' neets for nothin.'

'What are witches ?' demanded Louie, scornfully. 'I doan't bleeve in 'em.'

Reuben frowned a little.

'Theer wor witches yance, my gell, becos it's in th' Bible, an whativer's in th' Bible's *true*,' and the farmer brought his hand down on the top bar of the gate. 'I'm no gien ony judgment about 'em nowadays. Theer wor aw mak o' queer things said about Jenny Crum an Needham Farm i' th' owd days. I've heerd my grandmither say it worn't worth a Christian man's while to live in Needham Farm when Jenny Crum wor about. She meddled wi everythin—wi his lambs, an his coos, an his childer. I niver seed nothin mysel, so I doan't say nowt—not o' my awn knowledge. But I doan't soomhow bleeve as it's th' Awmighty's will to freeten a Christian coontry wi witches, *i' th' present dispensation*. An murderin's a gräat sin, wheder it's witches or oother foak.'

'In t' books they doan't coe it t' Witch's Pool at aw,' said Louie, obstinately. 'They coe it t' *Mermaid's* Pool.'

'An anoother book coes it a "Hammer-dry-ad,"' said David, mockingly, 'soa theer yo are.'

'Aye, soom faddlin kind of a name they gie it—I know—those Manchester chaps, as cooms trespassin ower t' Scout wheer they aren't wanted. To hear ony yan o' *them* talk, yo'd think theer wor only three fellows like 'im cam ower i' three ships, an two were drownded. T'aint ov ony account what they an their books coe it.'

And Reuben, as he leant against the gate, blew his smoke contemptuously in the air. It was not often that Reuben Grieve allowed himself, or was allowed by his world, to use airs of superiority towards any other human being whatever. But in the case of the Manchester clerks and warehousemen, who came tramping over the grouse moors which Reuben rented for his sheep, and were always being turned back by keepers or himself—and in their case only—did he exercise, once in a while, the commonest privilege of humanity.

'Did yo iver know onybody 'at went up on Easter Eve?' asked David.

Both children hung on the answer.

Reuben scratched his head. The tales of Jenny Crum, once well known to him, had sunk deep into the waves of memory of late years, and his slow mind had some difficulty in recovering them. But at last he said with the sudden brightening of recollection:

'Aye—of *coorse!*—I knew theer wor soom one. Yo know 'im, Davy, owd 'Lias o' Frimley Moor? He wor allus a foo'hardy sort o' creetur. But if he wor short o' wits when he gan up, he wor mich shorter when he cam down. That wor a rum skit!—now I think on 't. Sich a seet he wor! He came by here six o'clock i' th' mornin. I found him hangin ower t' yard gate theer, as white an slamp as a puddin cloth oop on eend; an I browt him in, an was for gien him soom tay. An yor aunt, she gien him a warld o' good advice about his gooins on. But bless yo, he didn't tak in a word o' 't. An for th' tay, he'd naw sooner swallowed it than he runs out, as quick as leetnin, an browt it aw up. He wor fairly clemmed wi' t' cold,—'at he wor. I put in th' horse, an I took him down to t' Frimley carrier, an we packed him i' soom rugs an straw, an soa he got home. But they put him out o' t' school, an he wor months in his bed. An they do tell me, as nobory can mak owt o' 'Lias Dawson these mony years, i' th' matter o' brains. Eh, but yo shudno meddle wi Satan.'

'What d'yo think he saw?' asked David, eagerly, his black eyes all aglow.

'He saw t' woman wi t' fish's tail—'at's what he saw,' said Louie, shrilly.

Reuben took no notice. He was sunk in silent reverie poking at his pipe. In spite of his confidence in the Almighty's increased

goodwill towards the present dispensation, he was not prepared to say for certain what 'Lias Dawson did or didn't see.

'Nobory should goo an meddle wi Satan,' he repeated slowly after an interval; and then opening the yard gate he went off on his usual Sunday walk over the moors to have a look at his more distant sheep.

Davy stood intently looking after him; so did Louie. She had clasped her hands behind her head, her eyes were wide, her look and attitude all eagerness. She was putting two and two together—her uncle's promise and the mermaid story as the Manchester man had delivered it. You had but to see her and wish, and, according to the Manchester man and his book, you got your wish. The child's hatred of sermons and ministers had not touched her capacity for belief of this sort in the least. She believed feverishly, and was enraged with David for setting up a rival creed, and with her uncle for endorsing it.

David turned and walked towards the farmyard. Louie followed him, and tapped him peremptorily on the arm. 'I'm gooin up theer Easter Eve—Saturday week'—and she pointed over her shoulder to the Scout.

'Gells conno be out neets,' said David firmly; 'if I goo I can tell yo.'

'Yo'll not goo without me—I'd tell Aunt Hannah!'

'Yo've naw moor sense nor rotten sticks!' said David, angrily. 'Yo'll get your death, an Aunt Hannah 'll be stick stock mad wi boath on us. If I goo she'll niver find out.'

Louie hesitated a moment. To provoke Aunt Hannah too much might, indeed, endanger the blue frock. But daring and curiosity triumphed.

'I doan't care!' she said, tossing her head; 'I'm gooin.'

David slammed the yard gate, and, hiding himself in a corner of the cowhouse, fell into moody meditations. It took all the tragic and mysterious edge off an adventure he had set his heart on that Louie should insist on going too. But there was no help for it. Next day they planned it together.

CHAPTER V

'REUBEN, ha yo seen t' childer?' inquired Aunt Hannah, poking her head round the door, so as to be heard by her husband, who was sitting outside cobbling at a bit of broken harness.

'Noa; niver seed un since dinner.'

'They went down to Clough End, two o'clock about, for t' bread, an I've yerd nothin ov em since. Coom in to your tay, Reuben! I'll keep nothin waitin for them! They may goo empty if they conno keep time!'

Reuben went in. An hour later the husband and wife came

out together, and stood looking down the steep road leading to the town.

'Just cast your eye on aw them stockins waitin to be mended,' said Hannah, angrily, turning back to the kitchen, and pointing to a chair piled with various garments. 'That's why she doon it, I spose. I'll be even wi her! It's a poor soart of a supper she'll get this neet, or he noather. An her stomach aw she cares for!'

Reuben wandered down into the road, strolled up and down for nearly an hour, while the sun set and the light waned, went as far as the corner by Wigson's farm, asked a passer-by, saw and heard nothing, and came back, shaking his head in answer to his wife's shrill interrogations.

'Wal, if I doan't gie Louie a good smackin,' ejaculated Hannah, exasperated; and she was just going back into the house when an exclamation from Reuben stopped her; instead, she ran out to him, holding on her cap against the east wind.

'Look theer,' he said, pointing; 'what iver is them two up to?'

For suddenly he had noticed outside the gate leading into the field a basket lying on the ground against the wall. The two peered at it with amazement, for it was their own basket, and in it reposed the loaves David had been told to bring back from Clough End, while on the top lay a couple of cotton reels and a card of mending which Louie had been instructed to buy for her aunt.

After a moment Reuben looked up, his face working.

'I'm thinkin, Hannah, they'n roon away!'

It seemed to him as he spoke that such a possibility had been always in his mind. And during the past week there had been much bad blood between aunt and niece. Twice had the child gone to bed supperless, and yesterday, for some impertinence, Hannah had given her a blow, the marks of which on her cheek Reuben had watched guiltily all day. At night he had dreamed of Sandy. Since Mr. Ancrum had set him thinking, and so stirred his conscience in various indirect and unforeseen ways, Sandy had been a terror to him; the dead man had gained a mysterious hold on the living.

'Roon away!' repeated Hannah scornfully; 'whar ud they roon to? They're just at soom o' their divilments, 'at's what they are. An if yo doan't tak a stick to boath on them when they coom back, *I will*, soa theer, Reuben Grieve. Yo niver had no sperrit wi 'em—niver—and that's yan reason why they've grown up soa ramjam full o' wickedness.'

It relieved her to abuse her husband. Reuben said nothing, but hung over the wall, straining his eyes into the gathering darkness. The wooded sides of the great moor which enclosed the valley to the north were fading into dimness, and to the east, above the ridge of Kinder Low, a young moon was rising. The black steep wall of the Scout was swiftly taking to itself that majesty which all mountains win from the approach of night. Involuntarily, Reuben held his breath, listening, hungering for

the sound of children's voices on the still air. Nothing—but a few intermittent bird notes and the eternal hurry of water from the moorland to the plain.

There was a step on the road, and a man passed whistling.

'Jim Wigson!' shouted Hannah, 'is that yo, Jim?'

The man opened the yard gate, and came through to them. Jim was the eldest son of the neighbouring farmer, whose girls were Louie's only companions. He was a full-blooded swaggering youth, with whom David was generally on bad terms. David despised him for an oaf who could neither read nor write, and hated him for a bully.

He grinned when Hannah asked him questions about the truants.

'Why, they're gone to Edale, th' yoong rascots, I'll uphowd yo! There's a parcel o' gipsies there tellin fortunes, an lots o' foak ha gone ower there to-day. You may mak your mind up they've gone to Edale. That Louie's a limb, she is. She's got spunk enough to waak to Lunnon if she'd a mind. Oh, they'll be back here soon enough, trust 'em.'

'I shut *my* door at nine o'clock,' said Hannah, grimly. 'Them as cooms after that, may sleep as they can.'

'Well, that'll be sharp wark for th' eyes if they're gone to Edale,' said Jim, with a laugh. 'It's a good step fro here to Edale.'

'Aye, an soom o' 't bad ground,' said Reuben uneasily—'varra bad ground.'

'Aye, it's not good walkin, neets. If they conno see their way when they get top o' t' Downfall, they'll stay theer till it gets mornin, if they've ony sort o' gumption. But, bless yo, it bean't gooin to be a dark neet,'—and he pointed to the moon. 'They'll be here afore yo goo to bed. An if yo want onybody to help yo gie Davy a bastin, just coe me, Mr. Grieve. Good neet to yo.'

Reuben fidgeted restlessly all the evening. Towards nine he went out on the pretext of seeing to a cow that had lately calved and was in a weakly state. He gave the animal her food and clean litter, doing everything more clumsily than usual. Then he went into the stable and groped about for a lantern that stood in the corner.

He found it, slipped through the farmyard into the lane, and then lit it out of sight of the house.

'It's bad ground top o' t' Downfall,' he said to himself, apologetically, as he guiltily opened the gate on to the moor—'varra bad ground.'

Hannah shut her door that night neither at nine nor at ten. For by the latter hour the master of the house was still absent, and nowhere to be found, in spite of repeated calls from the door and up the lane. Hannah guessed where he had gone without much difficulty; but her guess only raised her wrath to a white heat. Troublesome brats Sandy's children had always been—Louie more especially—but they had never perpetrated any such

overt act of rebellion as this before, and the dour, tyrannical woman was filled with a kind of silent frenzy as she thought of her husband going out to welcome the wanderers.

'It's a quare kind o' fatted calf they'll get when *I* lay hands on 'em,' she thought to herself as she stood at the front door, in the cold darkness, listening.

Meanwhile David and Louie, high up on the side of Kinder Scout, were speculating with a fearful joy as to what might be happening at the farm. The manner of their escape had cost them much thought. Should they slip out of the front door instead of going to bed? But the woodwork of the farm was old and creaking, and the bolts and bars heavy. They were generally secured before supper by Hannah herself, and, though they might be surreptitiously oiled, the children despaired—considering how close the kitchen was to the front door—of getting out without rousing Hannah's sharp ears. Other projects, in which windows and ropes played a part, were discussed. David held strongly that he alone could have managed any one of them, but he declined flatly to attempt them with a 'gell.' In the same way he alone could have made his way up the Scout and over the river in the dark. But who'd try it with a 'gell'?

The boy's natural conviction of the uselessness of 'gells' was never more disagreeably expressed than on this occasion. But he could not shake Louie off. She pinched him when he enraged her beyond bounds, but she never wavered in her determination to go too.

Finally they decided to brave Aunt Hannah and take the consequences. They meant to be out all night in hiding, and in the morning they would come back and take their beatings. David comfortably reflected that Uncle Reuben couldn't do him much harm, and, though Louie could hardly flatter herself so far, her tone, also, in the matter was philosophical.

'Theer's soom bits o' owd books i' th' top-attic,' she said to David; 'I'll leave 'em in t' stable, an when we coom home, I'll tie 'em on my back—under my dress—an she may leather away till Christmas.'

So on their return from Clough End with the bread—about five o'clock—they slipped into the field, crouching under the wall, so as to escape Hannah's observation, deposited their basket by the gate, took up a bundle and tin box which David had hidden that morning under the hedge, and, creeping back again into the road, passed noiselessly through the gate on to the moor, just as Aunt Hannah was lifting the kettle off the fire for tea.

Then came a wild and leaping flight over the hill, down to the main Kinder stream, across it, and up the face of the Scout—up, and up, with smothered laughter, and tumbles and scratches at every step, and a glee of revolt and adventure swelling every vein.

It was then a somewhat stormy afternoon, with alternate gusts of wind and gleams of sun playing on the black boulders, the red-brown slopes of the mountain. The air was really cold

and cutting, promising a frosty night. But the children took no notice of it. Up, and on, through the elastic carpet of heather and bilberry, and across bogs which showed like veins of vivid green on the dark surface of the moor; under circling peewits, who fled before them, crying with plaintive shrillness to each other, as though in protest; and past grouse-nests, whence the startled mothers soared precipitately with angry cluckings, each leaving behind her a loose gathering of eggs lying wide and open on the heather, those newly laid gleaming a brighter red beside their fellows. The tin box and its contents rattled under David's arm as he leapt and straddled across the bogs, choosing always the widest jump and the stiffest bit of climb, out of sheer wantonness of life and energy. Louie's thin figure, in its skimp cotton dress and red crossover, her long legs in their blue worsted stockings, seemed to fly over the moor, winged, as it were, by an ecstasy of freedom. If one could but be in two places at once—on the Scout—and peeping from some safe corner at Aunt Hannah's wrath!

Presently they came to the shoulder whereon—gleaming under the level light—lay the Mermaid's Pool. David had sufficiently verified the fact that the tarn did indeed bear this name in the modern guide-book parlance of the district. Young men and women, out on a holiday from the big towns near, and carrying little red or green 'guides,' spoke of the 'Mermaid's Pool' with the accent of romantic interest. But the boy had also discovered that no native-born farmer or shepherd about had ever heard of the name, or would have a word to say to it. And for the first time he had stumbled full into the deep deposit of witch-lore and belief still surviving in the Kinder Scout district, as in all the remoter moorland of the North. Especially had he won the confidence of a certain 'owd Matt,' a shepherd from a farm high on Mardale Moor; and the tales 'owd Matt' had told him—of mysterious hares coursed at night by angry farmers enraged by the 'bedivilment' of their stock, shot at with silver slugs, and identified next morning with some dreaded hag or other lying groaning and wounded in her bed—of calves' hearts burnt at midnight with awful ceremonies, while the baffled witch outside flung herself in rage and agony against the close-barred doors and windows—of spells and wise men—these things had sent chills of pleasing horror through the boy's frame. They were altogether new to him, in this vivid personal guise at least, and mixed up with all the familiar names and places of the district; for his childish life had been singularly solitary, giving to books the part which half a century ago would have been taken by tradition; and, moreover, the witch-belief in general had now little foothold among the younger generation of the Scout, and was only spoken of with reserve and discretion among the older men.

But the stories once heard had struck deep into the lad's quick and pondering mind. Jenny Crum seemed to have been the latest of all the great witches of Kinder Scout. The memory of

her as a real and awful personage was still fresh in the mind of many a grey-haired farmer; the history of her death was well known; and most of the local inhabitants, even the boys and girls, turned out, when you came to inquire, to be familiar with the later legends of the Pool, and, as David presently discovered, with one or more tales—for the stories were discrepant—of 'Lias Dawson's meeting with the witch, now fifteen years ago.

'*What* had 'Lias seen? What would they see?' His flesh crept deliciously.

'Wal, owd Mermaid!' shouted Louie, defiantly, as soon as she had got her breath again. 'Are yo coomin out to-night? Yo 'll ha coompany if yo do.'

David smiled contemptuously and did not condescend to argue.

'Are yo coomin on?' he said, shouldering his box and bundle again. 'They'st be up after us if we doan't look out.'

And on they went, climbing a steep boulder-strewn slope above the pool till they came to the 'edge' itself, a tossed and broken battlement of stone, running along the top of the Scout. Here the great black slabs of grit were lying fantastically piled upon each other at every angle and in every possible combination. The path which leads from the Hayfield side across the desolate tableland of the Scout to the Snake Inn on the eastern side of the ridge, ran among them, and many a wayfarer, benighted or mist-bound on the moor, had taken refuge before now in their caverns and recesses, waiting for the light, and dreading to find himself on the cliffs of the Downfall.

But David pushed on past many hiding-places well known to him, till the two reached the point where the mountain face sweeps backward in the curve of which the Downfall makes the centre. At the outward edge of the curve a great buttress of ragged and jutting rocks descends perpendicularly towards the valley, like a ruined staircase with displaced and gigantic steps.

Down this David began to make his way, and Louie jumped, and slid, and swung after him, as lithe and sure-footed as a cat. Presently David stopped. 'This ull do,' he said, surveying the place with a critical eye.

They had just slid down a sloping chimney of rock, and were now standing on a flat block, over which hung another like a penthouse roof. On the side of the Downfall there was a projecting stone, on which David stepped out to look about him.

Holding on to a rock above for precaution's sake, he reconnoitred their position. To his left was the black and semicircular cliff, down the centre of which the Downfall stream, now tamed and thinned by the dry spring winds, was trickling. The course of the stream was marked by a vivid orange colour, produced, apparently, in the grit by the action of water; and about halfway down the fall a mass of rock had recently slipped, leaving a bright scar, through which one saw, as it were, the inner mass of the Peak, the rectangular blocks, now thick, now thin, as of some Cyclopean masonry, wherewith the earth-forces had built it up in

days before a single alp had yet risen on the face of Europe. Below the boy's feet a precipice, which his projecting stone overhung, fell to the bed of the stream. On this side at least they were abundantly protected.

On the moorside the steep broken ground of the hill came up to the rocky line they had been descending, and offered no difficulty to any sure-footed person. But no path ran anywhere near them, and from the path up above they were screened by the grit 'edge' already spoken of. Moreover, their penthouse, or half-gable, had towards the Downfall a tolerably wide opening; but towards the moor and the north there was but a narrow hole, which David soon saw could be stopped by a stone. When he crept back into their hiding-place, it pleased him extremely.

'They'll niver find us, if they look till next week!' he exclaimed exultantly, and, slipping off the heavy bundle strapped on his back, he undid its contents. Two old woollen rugs appeared—one a blanket, the other a horse-rug—and wrapped up in the middle of them a jagged piece of tarpaulin, a hammer, some wooden pegs, and two or three pieces of tallow dip. Louie, sitting cross-legged in the other corner, with her chin in her hands, looked on with her usual detached and critical air. David had not allowed her much of a voice in the preparations, and she felt an instinctive aversion towards other people's ingenuities. All she had contributed was something to while away the time, in the shape of a bag of bull's-eyes, bought with some of the sixpence Uncle Reuben had given her.

Having laid out his stores, David went to work. Getting out on the projecting stone again, he laid the bit of tarpaulin along the sloping edge of the rock which roofed them, pegged it down into crevices at either end, and laid a stone to hold it in the middle. Then he slipped back again, and, behold, there was a curtain between them and the Downfall, which, as the dusk was fast advancing, made the little den inside almost completely dark.

'What's t' good o' that?' inquired Louie, scornfully, more than half inclined to put out a mischievous hand and pull it down again.

'Doan't worrit, an yo'll see,' returned David, and Louie's curiosity got the better of her malice.

Stooping down beside her, he looked through the hole which opened to the moor. His eye travelled down the hillside to the path far below, just visible in the twilight to a practised eye, to the river, to the pasture-fields on the hill beyond, and to the smoke, rising above the tops of some unseen trees, which marked the site of the farmhouse. No one in sight. The boy crawled out, and searched the moor till he found a large flattish stone, which he brought and placed against the opening, ready to be drawn quite across it from inside.

Then he slipped back again, and in the glimmer of light which remained groped for his tin box. Louie stooped over and eagerly watched him open it. Out came a bottle of milk, some

large slices of bread, some oatcake, and some cheese. In the corner, recklessly near the cheese, lurked a grease-bespattered lantern and a box of matches. David had borrowed the lantern that afternoon from a Clough End friend under the most solemn vows of secrecy, and he drew it out now with a deliberate and special relish. When he had driven a peg into a cranny of the rock, trimmed half a dip carefully, lighted it, put it into the lantern, and hung the lantern on the peg, he fell back on his heels to study the effect, with a beaming countenance, filled all through with the essentially human joy of contrivance.

'Now, then, d'yo see what that tarpaulin 's for?' he inquired triumphantly of Louie.

But Louie's mouth was conveniently occupied with a bull's-eye, and she only sucked it the more vigorously in answer.

'Why, yo little silly, if it worn't for that we couldno ha no leet. They'd see us from t' fields even, as soon as it 's real dark.'

'Doan't bleeve it,' said Louie, laconically, in a voice much muffled by bull's-eyes.

'Wal, yo needn't; I'm gooin to have my tea.'

And David, diving into the tin, brought out a hunch of bread and a knob of cheese. The voracity with which he fell on them, soon, with him also, stopped up the channels of speech. Louie, alarmed perhaps by the rapidity with which the mouthfuls disappeared, slid up on her heels and claimed her share. Never was there a more savoury meal than that! Their little den with its curtain felt warm for the moment after the keen air of the moor; the lantern light seemed to shut them in from the world, gave them the sense of settlers carving a home out of the desert, and milk which had been filched from Aunt Hannah lay like nectar in the mouth.

After their meal both children crept out on to the moor to see what might be going on in the world outside. Darkness was fast advancing. A rising wind swept through the dead bracken, whirled round the great grit boulders, and sent a shiver through Louie's thin body.

'It's cowd,' she said pettishly; 'I'm gooin back.'

'Did yo spose it wor gooin to be warm, yo little silly? That's why I browt t' rugs, of course. Gells never think o' nothin. It's parishin cowd here, neets—fit to tie yo up in knots wi th' rheumatics, like Jim Spedding, if yo doan't mind yorsel. It wor only laying out a neet on Frimley Moor—poachin, I guess—'at twisted Jim that way.'

Louie's countenance fell. Jim Spedding was a little crooked greengrocer in Clough End, of whom she had a horror. The biting hostile wind, which obliged her to hold her hat on against it with both hands, the black moor at their feet, the grey sweep of sky, the pale cloudy moon, the darkness which was fast enveloping them—blotting out the distant waves of hill, and fusing the great blocks of grit above them into one threatening mass—all these became suddenly hateful to her. She went back into

their den, wrapped herself up in one of the tattered rugs, and crept sulkily into a corner. The lantern gleamed on the child's huddled form, the frowning brow, the great vixenish eyes. She had half a mind to run home, in spite of Aunt Hannah. Hours to wait! and she loathed waiting.

But gradually, as the rug warmed her, the passion for adventure and mystery—the vision of the mermaid—the hope of the blue cotton—reasserted themselves, and the little sharp face relaxed. She began to amuse herself with hunting the spiders and beetles which ran across the rocky roof above her head, or crept in and out of the crevices of stone, wondering, no doubt, at this unbidden and tormenting daylight. She caught one or two small blackbeetles in a dirty rag of a handkerchief—for she would not touch them if she could help it—and then it delighted her to push aside the curtain, stretch her hand out into the void darkness, and let them fall into the gulf below. Even if they could fly, she reflected, it must 'gie 'em a good start.'

Meanwhile, David had charged up the hill, filled with a sudden curiosity to see what the top of the Scout might look like by night. He made his way through the battlement of grit, found the little path behind, gleaming white in the moonlight; because of the quartz sheddings which wind and weather are for ever teasing out of the grit, and which drift into the open spaces; and at last, guided by the sound and the gleam of water, he made out the top of the Downfall, climbed a high peat bank, and the illimitable plateau of the Scout lay wide and vast before him.

Here, on the mountain-top, there seemed to be more daylight left than on its rocky sides, and the moon among the parting clouds shone intermittently over the primeval waste. The top of the Peak is, so to speak, a vast black glacier, whereof the crevasses are great fissures, ebon-black in colour, sometimes ten feet deep, and with ten feet more of black water at the bottom. For miles on either side the ground is seamed and torn with these crevasses, now shallower, now deeper, succeeding each other at intervals of a yard or two, and it is they which make the crossing of the Peak in the dark or in mist a matter of danger sometimes even for the native. David, high on his bank, from which the black overhanging eaves curled inwards beneath his feet to a sullen depth of water, could see against the moonlit sky the posts which marked the track from the Downfall to the Snake Inn on the Glossop Road. Miss that track—a matter of some fifteen minutes' walk for the sturdy farmer who knows it well—and you find yourself lost in a region which has no features and no landmarks, where the earth lays snares for you and the mists betray you, and where even in bright sunshine there reigns an eternal and indescribable melancholy. The strangeness and wildness of the scene entered the boy's consciousness, and brought with them a kind of exaltation. He stood gazing; that inner life of his, of which Louie, his constant companion, knew as good as nothing, asserting itself.

For the real companions of his heart were not Louie or the boys with whom he had joked and sparred at school; they were ideas, images, sounds, imaginations, caught from books or from the talk of old 'Lias and Mr. Ancrum. He had but to stand still a moment, as it were, to listen, and the voices and sights of another world came out before him like players on to a stage. Spaces of shining water, crossed by ships with decks manned by heroes for whom the blue distance was for ever revealing new lands to conquer, new adventures to affront; the plumed Indian in his forest divining the track of his enemy from a displaced leaf or twig; the Zealots of Jehovah urging a last frenzied defence of Jehovah's Sanctuary against the Roman host; and now, last of all, the gloom and flames, the infernal palaces, the towering fiends, the grandiose and lumbering war of 'Paradise Lost': these things, together with the names and suggestions of 'Lias's talk—that whole crew of shining, fighting, haranguing men and women whom the old dreamer was for ever bringing into weird action on the moorside—lived in the boy's mind, and in any pause of silence, as we have said, emerged and took possession.

It was only that morning, in an old meal-chest which had belonged to his grandfather, James Grieve, he had discovered the old calf-bound copy of 'Paradise Lost,' which was now in one of his pockets, balanced by 'Anson's Voyages' in the other. All the morning he had been lying hidden in a corner of the sheepfold devouring it, the rolling verse imprinting itself on the boy's plastic memory by a sort of enchantment—

> Yon dreary plain, forlorn and wild,
> The seat of desolation, void of light,
> Save what the glimmering of these livid flames
> Casts pale and dreadful.

He chanted the words aloud, flinging them out in an ecstasy of pleasure. Before him, as it seemed, there stretched that very plain 'forlorn and wild,' with its black fissures and its impenetrable horizons; the fitful moonlight stood for the glimmering of the Tartarean flames; the remembered words and the actual sights played into and fused with each other, till in the cold and darkness the boy thrilled all through with that mingling of joy and terror which is only possible to the creature of fine gifts and high imagination.

Jenny Crum, too! A few more hours and he might see her face to face—as 'Lias had seen her. He quaked a little at the thought, but he would not have flinched for the world. *He* was not going to lose his wits, as 'Lias did; and as for Louie, if she were frightened it would do her good to be afraid of something.

Hark! He turned, stooped, put his hand to his ear.

The sound he heard had startled him, turned him pale. But he soon recovered himself. It was the sound of heavy boots on stones, and it was brought to him by the wind, as it seemed, from

far below. Some one was coming after them—perhaps more than one. He thought he heard a voice.

He leapt fissure after fissure like a young roe, fled to the top of the Downfall and looked over. Did the light show through the tarpaulin? Alack!—there must be a rent somewhere—for he saw a dim glow-worm light beyond the cliff, on the dark rib of the mountain. It was invisible from below, but any roving eye from the top would be caught by it in an instant. In a second he had raced along the edge, dived in and out of the blocks, guiding his way by a sort of bat's instinct, till he reached the rocky stairway, which he descended at imminent risk of his neck.

'Put your hand ower t' leet, Louie, till I move t' stone!'

The light disappeared, David crept in, and the two children crouched together in a glow of excitement.

'Is 't Uncle Reuben?' whispered Louie, pressing her face against the side of the rocks, and trying to look through the chink between it and the covering stone.

'Aye—wi a lantern. But there's talkin—theer's someone else. Jim Wigson, mebbe.'

'If it's Jim Wigson,' said Louie, between her small, shut teeth, 'I'll bite him!'

'Cos yo're a gell! Gells and cats bite—they can't do nowt else!'

Whereupon Louie pinched him, and David, giving an involuntary kick as he felt the nip, went into first a fit of smothered laughter, and then seized her arm in a tight grip.

'Keep quiet, conno yo? Now they're coomin, an I bleeve they're coomin this way!'

But, after another minute's waiting, he was quite unable to obey his own injunction, and he crept out on the stone overlooking the precipice to look.

'Coom back! They'll see yo!' cried Louie, in a shrill whisper; and she caught him by the ankle.

David gave a kick. 'Let goo; if yo do 'at I shall fall an be kilt!'

She held her breath. Presently, with an exclamation, he knelt down and looked over the edge of the great sloping block which served them for roof.

'Wal, I niver! Theer's nobory but Uncle Reuben, an he's talkin to hissel. Wal, this is a rum skit!'

And he stayed outside watching, in spite of Louie's angry commands to him to come back into the den. David had no fears of being discovered by Uncle Reuben. If it had been Jim Wigson it would have been different.

Presently, on the path some sixty feet above them, but hidden from them by the mass of tumbled rocks through which they had descended, they heard some one puffing and blowing, a stick striking and slipping on the stones, and weird rays of light stole down the mountain-side, and in and out of the vast blocks with which it was overstrewn.

'He's stopt up theer,' said David, creeping in under the gable, 'an I mun hear what he's sayin. I'm gooin up nearer. If yo coom we'll be caught.'

'Yo stoopid!' cried Louie. But he had crawled up the narrow chimney they had come down by in a moment, and she was left alone. Her spirit failed her a little. She daren't climb after him in the dark.

David clambered in and out, the fierce wind that beat the side of the mountain masking whatever sounds he may have made, till he found himself directly under the place where Reuben Grieve sat, slowly recovering his breath.

'*O Lord! O Lord!* They're aw reet, Sandy—they're aw reet!'

The boy crouched down sharply under an overhanging stone, arrested by the name—*Sandy*—his father's name.

Once or twice since he came to Kinder he had heard it on Uncle Reuben's lips, once or twice from neighbours who had known James Grieve's sons in their youth. But Sandy had left the farm early and was little remembered, and the true story of Sandy's life was unknown in the valley, though there were many rumours. What the close and timid Reuben heard from Mr. Gurney, the head of Sandy's firm, after Sandy's death, he told to no one but Hannah. The children knew generally, from what Hannah often let fall when she was in a temper, that their mother was a disgrace to them, but they knew no more, and, with the natural instinct of forlorn creatures on the defensive, studiously avoided the subject within the walls of Needham Farm. They might question old 'Lias; they would suffer many things rather than question their uncle and aunt.

But David especially had had many secret thoughts he could not put away, of late, about his parents. And to hear his father's name dropped like this into the night moved the lad strangely. He lay close, listening with all his ears, expecting passionately, he knew not what.

But nothing came—or the wind carried it away. When he was rested, Reuben got up and began to move about with the lantern, apparently throwing its light from side to side.

'David! Louie!'

The hoarse, weak voice, strained to its utmost pitch, died away on the night wind, and a weird echo came back from the cliffs of the Downfall.

There was no menace in the cry—rather a piteous entreaty. The truant below had a strange momentary impulse to answer—to disclose himself. But it was soon past, and instead, he crept well out of reach of the rays which flashed over the precipitous ground about him. As he did so he noticed the Mermaid's Pool, gleaming in a pale ray of moonlight, some two hundred feet below. A sudden alarm seized him, lest Reuben should be caught by it, put two and two together and understand.

But Reuben was absorbed in a discomfort, half moral, half

superstitious, and nothing else reached the slow brain—which was besides preoccupied by Jim Wigson's suggestion. After a bit he picked up his stick and went on again. David, eagerly watching, tracked him along the path which follows the ridge, and saw the light pause once more close to the Downfall.

So far as the boy could see, his uncle made a long stay at a point beyond the stream, the bed of which was just discernible, as a sort of paler streak on the darkness.

'Why, that's about whar th' Edale path cooms in,' thought David, wondering. 'What ud he think we'd be doin theer?'

Faint sounds came to him in a lull of the wind, as though Reuben were shouting again—shouting many times. Then the light went wavering on, defining in its course the curved ridge of the further moor, till at last it made a long circuit downwards, disappearing for a minute somewhere in the dark bosom of Kinder Low, about midway between earth and sky. David guessed that Uncle Reuben must be searching the smithy. Then it descended rapidly, till finally it vanished behind the hill far below, which was just distinguishable in the cloudy moonshine. Uncle Reuben had gone home.

David drew a long breath. But that patient quest in the dark—the tone of the farmer's call—that mysterious word *Sandy*, had touched the boy, made him restless. His mood grew a little flat, even a little remorseful. The joy of their great adventure ebbed a little.

However, he climbed down again to Louie, and found a dark elfish figure standing outside their den, and dancing with excitement.

'Wouldn't yo like to ketch us—wouldn't yo?—wouldn't yo?' screeched the child, beside herself. She too had been watching, had seen the light vanish.

'Yo'll have t' parish up after yo if yo doan't howd your tongue,' said David roughly.

And creeping into their den he relit the lantern. Then he pulled out a watch, borrowed from the same friend who had provided the lantern. Past nine. Two hours and more before they need think of starting downwards for the Pool.

Louie condescended to come in again, and the stone was drawn close. But how fierce the wind had grown, and how nipping was the air! David shivered, and looked about for the rugs. He wrapt Louie in the horse-rug, which was heaviest, and tucked the blanket round himself.

'Howd that tight round yo,' he commanded, struck with an uneasy sense of responsibility, as he happened to notice how starved she looked, 'an goo to sleep if yo want to. I'll wake yo—I'm gooin to read.'

Louie rolled the rug round her chrysalis-like, and then, disdaining the rest of David's advice, sat bolt upright against the rock, her wide-open eyes staring defiantly at all within their ken.

The minutes went by. David sat close up against the lantern, bitterly cold, but reading voraciously. At last, however, a sharper gust than usual made him look up and turn restive. Louie still sat in the opposite corner as stiffly as before, but over the great staring eyes the lids had just fallen, sorely against their owner's will; the head was dropping against the rock; the child was fast asleep. It occurred to David she looked odd; the face seemed so grey and white. He instinctively took his own blanket and put it over her. The silence and helplessness of her sleep seemed to appeal to him, to change his mood towards her, for the action was brotherly and tender. Then he pushed the stone aside and crept out on to the moor.

There he stood for a while, with his hands in his pockets, marking time to warm himself. How the wind bit to be sure!—and it would be colder still by dawn.

The pool showed dimly beneath him, and the gruesome hour was stealing on them fast. His heart beat quick. The weirdness and loneliness of the night came home to him more than they had done yet. The old woman dragged to her death, the hooting crowd, the inexorable parson, the struggle in the water, the last gurgling cry—the vision rose before him on the dark with an ever ghastlier plainness than a while ago on the mountain-top. *How* had 'Lias seen her that the sight had changed him so? Did she come to him with her drowned face and floating grey hair—grip him with her cold hands? David, beginning to thrill in good earnest, obstinately filled in the picture with all the horrible detail he could think of, so as to harden himself. Only now he wished with all his heart that Louie were safe at home.

An idea occurred to him. He smiled at it, turned it over, gradually resolved upon it. She would lead him a life afterward, but what matter?—let her!

From the far depths of the unseen valley a sound struck upwards, piercing through the noises of river and wind. It was the clock of Clough End church, tolling eleven.

Well, one could not stand perishing there another hour. He stooped down and crawled in beside Louie. She was sleeping heavily, the added warmth of David's blanket conducing thereto. He hung over her, watching her breathing with a merry look, which gradually became a broad grin. It was a real shame—she would be just mad when she woke up. But mermaids were all stuff, and Jenny Crum would 'skeer' her to death. Just in proportion as the adventure became more awesome and more real did the boy's better self awake. He grew soft for his sister, while, as he proudly imagined, iron for himself.

He crept in under the blanket carefully so as not to disturb her. He was too tired and excited to read. He would think the hour out. So he lay staring at the opposite wall of rock, at its crevices, and creeping ants, at the odd lights and shadows thrown by the lantern, straining his eyes every now and then, that he might be the more sure how wide awake they were.

Louie stretched herself. What was the matter? Where was she? What was that smell? She leant forward on her elbow. The lantern was just going out, and smelt intolerably. A cold grey light was in the little den. What? Where?

A loud wail broke the morning silence, and David, sleeping profoundly, his open mouth just showing above the horse-rug, was roused by a shower of blows from Louie's fists. He stirred uneasily, tried to escape them by plunging deeper into the folds, but they pursued him vindictively.

'Give ower!' he said at last, striking back at random, and then sitting up he rubbed his eyes. There was Louie sitting opposite to him, crying great tears of rage and pain, now rocking her ankle as if it hurt her, and now dealing cuffs at him.

He hastily pulled out his watch. Half-past four o'clock!

'Yo great gonner, yo!' sobbed Louie, her eyes blazing at him through her tears. 'Yo good-for-nowt, yo muffin-yed, yo donkey!' And so on through all the words of reviling known to the Derbyshire child. David looked extremely sheepish under them.

Then suddenly he put his head down on his knees and shook with laughter. The absurdity of it all—of their preparations, of his own terrors, of the disturbance they had made, all to end in this flat and futile over-sleeping, seized upon him so that he could not control himself. He laughed till he cried, while Louie hit and abused him and cried too. But her crying had a different note, and at last he looked up at her, sobered.

'Howd your tongue!—an doan't keep bully-raggin like 'at! What's t' matter wi yo?'

For answer, she rolled over on the rock and lay on her face, howling with pain. David sprang up and bent over her.

'What *iver's* t' matter wi yo, Louie?'

But she kept him off like a wild cat, and he could make nothing of her till her passion had spent itself and she was quiet again, from sheer exhaustion.

Then David, who had been standing near, shivering, with his hands in his pockets, tried again.

'Now, Louie, do coom home,' he said appealingly. 'I can find yo a place in t' stable ull be warmer nor this. You be parished if yo stay here.' For, ignorant as he was, her looks began to frighten him.

Louie would have liked never to speak to him again. The thought of the blue cotton and of her own lost chance seemed to be burning a hole in her. But the stress of his miserable look drew her eyes open whether she would or no, and when she saw him her self-pity overcame her.

'I conno walk,' she said, with a sudden loud sob. 'It's my leg.'

'What's wrong wi't?' said David, inspecting it anxiously. 'It's got th' cowd in 't, that's what it is; it's th' rheumatics, I speck. Tak howd on me, I'll help yo down.'

And with much coaxing on his part and many cries and outbursts on hers he got her up at last, and out of the den. He had tied his tin box across his back, and Louie, with the rugs wrapped about her, clung, limping, and with teeth chattering, on to his arm. The child was in the first throes of a sharp attack of rheumatism, and half her joints were painful.

That was a humiliating descent! A cold grey morning was breaking over the moor; the chimneys of the distant cotton-towns rose out of mists, under a sky streaked with windy cloud. The Mermaid's Pool, as they passed it, looked chill and mocking; and the world altogether felt so raw and lonely that David welcomed the first sheep they came across with a leap of the heart, and positively hungered for a first sight of the farm. How he got Louie—in whose cheeks the fever-spots were rising—over the river he never quite remembered. But at last he had dragged her up the hill, through the fields close to the house, where the lambs were huddling in the nipping dawn beside their mothers, and into the farmyard.

The house rose before them grey and frowning. The lower windows were shuttered; in the upper ones the blinds were pulled closely down; not a sign of life anywhere. Yes; the dogs had heard them! Such a barking as began! Jock, in his kennel by the front door, nearly burst his chain in his joyful efforts to get at them; while Tib, jumping the half-door of the out-house in the back yard, where he had been curled up in a heap of bracken, leapt about them and barked like mad.

Louie sank down crying and deathly pale on a stone by the stable door.

'They'll hear that fast enoof,' said David, looking anxiously up at the shut windows.

But the dogs went on barking, and nothing happened. Ten minutes of chilly waiting passed away.

'Tak him away, *do!*' she cried, as Tib jumped up at her. 'No, I woan't!—I woan't!'

The last words rose to a shriek, as David tried to persuade her to go into the stable, and let him make her a bed in the straw. He stood looking at her in despair. They had always supposed they would be locked out; but surely the sleepers inside must hear the dogs. He turned and stared at the house, hungering for some sign of life in it. Uncle Reuben would hear them—Uncle Reuben would let them in!

But the blinds of the top room never budged. Louie, with her head against the stable-door, and her eyes shut, went on convulsively sobbing, while Tibby sniffed about her for sympathy. And the bitter wind coming from the Scout whistled through the yard and seemed to cut the shivering child like a knife.

'I'll mak a clunter agen th' window wi some gravel,' said David at last, in desperation. And he picked up a handful and threw it, first cautiously, then recklessly. Yes!—at last a hand moved the blind—a hand the children knew well, and a face

appeared to one side of it. Hannah Grieve had never looked so forbidding as at that moment. The boy caught one glance of a countenance pale with wrath and sleeplessness; of eyes that seemed to blaze at them through the window; then the blind fell. He waited breathlessly for minute after minute. Not a sound.

Furiously he stooped for more gravel, and flung it again and again. For an age, as it seemed to him, no more notice was taken. At last, there was an agitation in the blind, as though more than one person was behind it. It was Hannah who lifted it again; but David thought he caught a motion of her arm as though she were holding some one else back. The lad pointed excitedly to Louie.

'She's took bad!' he shouted. 'Uncle Reuben!—Uncle Reuben!—coom down an see for yorsel. If yo let her in, yo can keep me out as long as yo like!'

Hannah looked at him, and at the figure huddled against the stable-door—looked deliberately, and then, as deliberately, pulled the blind down lower than before, and not a sign of Reuben anywhere.

A crimson flame sprang to David's cheek. He rushed at the door, and while with one hand he banged away at the old knocker, he thumped with the other, kicking lustily the while at the panels, till Louie, almost forgetting her pains in the fierce excitement of the moment, thought he would kick them in. In the intervals of his blows, David could hear voices inside in angry debate.

'Uncle Reuben!' he shouted, stopping the noise for a moment, 'Uncle Reuben, Louie's turned sick! She's clemmed wi t' cold. If yo doan't open th' door, I'll go across to Wigson's, and tell 'em as Louie's parishin, an yo're bein th' death on her.'

The bolt shot back, and there stood Reuben, his red hair sticking up wildly from his head, his frame shaking with unusual excitement.

'What are yo makin that roompus for, Davy?' began Reuben, with would-be severity. 'Ha done wi yo, or I'll have to tak a stick to yo.'

But the boy stood akimbo on the steps, and the old farmer shrank before him, as David's black eye travelled past him to a gaunt figure on the stairs.

'Yo'll tak noa stick to me, Uncle Reuben. I'll not put up wi it, and yo know it. I'm goin to bring Louie in. We've bin on t' moor by t' Pool lookin for th' owd witch, an we both on us fell asleep, an Louie's took the rheumatics.—Soa theer.—Stan out o' t' way.'

And running back to Louie, who cried out as he lifted her up, he half carried, half dragged her in.

'Why, she's like death,' cried Reuben. 'Hannah! summat hot—at woonst.'

But Hannah did not move. She stood at the foot of the stairs, barring the way, the chill morning light falling on her

threatening attitude, her grey dishevelled hair and all the squalid disarray of her dress.

'Them as doos like beggar's brats,' she said grimly, 'may fare like 'em. *I*'ll do nowt for 'em.'

The lad came up to her, his look all daring and resolution—his sister on his arm. But as he met the woman's expression, his lips trembled, he suddenly broke down.

'Now, look here,' he cried, with a sob in his throat. 'I know we're beggar's brats. I know yo hate th' seet on us. But I wor t' worst. I'm t' biggest. Tak Louie in, and bully-rag me as mich as yo like. Louie—*Louie!*' and he hung over her in a frenzy, 'wake up, Louie!'

But the child was insensible. Fatigue, the excitement of the struggle, the anguish of movement had done their work—she lay like a log upon his arm.

'She's fainted,' said Hannah, recognising the fact with a sort of fierce reluctance. 'Tak her up, an doan't stan blatherin theer.'

And she moved out of the way.

The boy gathered up the thin figure, and, stumbling over the tattered rugs, carried her up by a superhuman effort.

Reuben leant against the passage wall, staring at his wife.

'Yo're a hard woman, Hannah—a hard woman,' he said to her under his breath, in a low, shaken voice. 'An yo coed 'em beggar's brats—oh Lord—Lord!'

'Howd your tongue, an blow up t' fire,' was all the reply she vouchsafed him, and Reuben obeyed.

Meanwhile upstairs Louie had been laid on her bed. Consciousness had come back, and she was moaning.

David stood beside her in utter despair. He thought she was going to die, and he had done it. At last he sank down beside her, and flinging an arm round her, he laid his hot cheek to her icy one.

'Louie, doan't—doan't—I'll tak yo away from here, Louie, when I can. I'll tak care on yo, Louie. Doan't, Louie,—doan't!'

His whole being seemed rent asunder by sympathy and remorse. Uncle Reuben, coming up with some hot gruel, found him sitting on the bed beside his sister, on whom he had heaped all the clothing he could find, the tears running down his cheeks.

CHAPTER VI

From that night forward, David looked upon the farm and all his life there with other eyes.

Up till now, in spite of the perennial pressure of Hannah's tyrannies, which, however, weighed much less upon him than upon Louie, he had been—as he had let Reuben see—happy enough. The open-air life, the animals, his books, out of all of them he managed to extract a very fair daily sum of enjoyment.

And he had been content enough with his daily tasks—herding the sheep, doing the rough work of the stable and cow-house, running Aunt Hannah's errands with the donkey-cart to Clough End, helping in the haymaking and the sheep-shearing, or the driving of stock to and from the various markets Reuben frequented. All these things he had done with a curious placidity, a detachment and yet readiness of mind, as one who lends himself, without reluctance, to a life not his own. It was this temper mainly, helped, no doubt, by his unusual tastes and his share of foreign blood and looks, which had set him apart from the other lads of his own class in the neighbourhood. He had few friends of his own age, yet he was not unpopular, except, perhaps, with an overbearing animal like Jim Wigson, who instinctively looked upon other people's brains as an offence to his own muscular pretensions.

But his Easter Eve struggle with Hannah closed, as it were, a childhood, which, though hard and loveless, had been full of compensations and ignorant of its own worst wants. It woke in him the bitterness of the orphan dependant, who feels himself a burden and loathes his dependence. That utter lack of the commonest natural affection, in which he and Louie had been brought up—for Reuben's timorous advances had done but little to redress the balance—had not troubled him much, till suddenly it was writ so monstrous large in Hannah's refusal to take pity on the fainting and agonised Louie. Thenceforward every morsel of food he took at her hands seemed to go against him. They were paupers, and Aunt Hannah hated them. The fact had been always there, but it had never meant anything substantial to him till now. Now, at last, that complete dearth of love, in which he had lived since his father died, began to react in revolt and discontent.

The crisis may have been long preparing, those words of his uncle as to his future, as well as the incident of their locking out, may have had something to say to it. Anyway, a new reflective temper set in. The young immature creature became self-conscious, began to feel the ferments of growth. The ambition and the restlessness his father had foreseen, with dying eyes, began to stir.

Reuben's qualms returned upon him. On the 15th of May, he and David went to Woodhead, some sixteen or seventeen miles off, to receive the young stock from the Yorkshire breeders, which were to be grazed on the farm during the summer. In general, David had taken the liveliest interest in the animals, in the number and quality of them, in the tariff to be paid for them, and the long road there and back had been cheered for the farmer by the lad's chatter, and by the athletic antics he was always playing with any handy gate or tree which crossed their path.

'Them heifers ull want a deal o' grass puttin into 'em afoor they'll be wuth onybody's buyin, Davy,' said Reuben, inspecting

his mixed herd with a critical eye from a roadside bank, as they climbed the first hill on their return journey.

'Aye, they're a poor lot,' returned David, shortly, and walked on as far in front of his uncle as might be, with his head in the air and his moody look fixed on the distance.

'T' Wigsons ull be late gettin whoam,' began Reuben again, with an uneasy look at the boy. 'Owd Wigson wor that full up wi yell when I last seed him they'll ha a job to get him started straight this neet.'

To this remark David had nothing at all to say, though in general he had a keen neighbourly relish for the misdeeds of the Wigsons. Reuben did not know what to make of him. However, a mile further on he made another attempt:

'Lord, how those Yorkshire breeders did talk! Yo'd ha thowt they'd throw their jaws off the hinges. An a lot o' gimcrack notions as iver wor—wi their new foods, an their pills an strengthening mixtures—messin wi cows as though they wor humans. Why conno they leave God Awmighty alone? He can bring a calvin cow through beawt ony o' their meddlin, I'll uphowd yo!'

But still not a word from the lad in front. Reuben might as well have talked to the wall beside him. He had grown used to the boy's companionship, and the obstinate silence which David still preserved from hour to hour as they drove their stock homewards made a sensible impression on him.

Inside the house there was a constant, though in general a silent, struggle going on between the boy and Hannah on the subject of Louie. Louie, after the escapade of Easter Eve, was visited with a sharp attack of inflammatory rheumatism, only just stopping short of rheumatic fever. Hannah got a doctor, and tended her sufficiently while the worst lasted, partly because she was, after all, no monster, but only a commonly sordid and hard-natured woman, and partly because for a day or two Louie's state set her pondering, perforce, what might be the effect on Mr. Gurney's remittances if the child incontinently died. This thought undoubtedly quickened whatever natural instincts might be left in Hannah Grieve; and the child had her doctor, and the doctor's orders were more or less followed.

But when she came downstairs again—a lanky, ghostly creature, much grown, her fierce black eyes more noticeable than ever in her pinched face—Hannah's appetite for 'snipin'—to use the expressive Derbyshire word—returned upon her. The child was almost bullied into her bed again—or would have been if David had not found ways of preventing it. He realised for the first time that, as the young and active male of the household, he was extremely necessary to Hannah's convenience, and now whenever Hannah ill-treated Louie her convenience suffered. David disappeared. Her errands were undone, the wood uncut, and coals and water had to be carried as they best could. As to reprisals, with a strong boy of fourteen, grown very nearly

to a man's height, Hannah found herself a good deal at a loss. 'Bully-raggin' he took no more account of than of a shower of rain; blows she instinctively felt it would have been dangerous to attempt; and as to deprivation of food, the lad seemed to thrive on hunger, and never whistled so loudly as when, according to Hannah's calculations, he must have been as 'keen-bitten as a hawk.' For the first time in her life Hannah was to some extent tamed. When there was business about she generally felt it expedient to let Louie alone.

But this sturdy protection was more really a matter of roused pride and irritation on David's part than of brotherly love. It was the tragedy of Louie Grieve's fate—whether as child or woman—that she was not made to be loved. Whether *she* could love, her story will show; but to love her when you were close to her was always hard. How different the days would have been for the moody lad, who had at last learnt to champion her, if their common isolation and dependence had but brought out in her towards him anything clinging—anything confidential, any true spirit of comradeship! On the contrary, while she was still ill in bed, and almost absolutely dependent on what he might choose to do for her, she gibed and flouted him past bearing, mainly, no doubt, for the sake of breaking the tedium of her confinement a little. And when she was about again, and he was defending her weakness from Aunt Hannah, it seemed to him that she viewed his proceedings rather with a malicious than a grateful eye. It amused and excited her to see him stand up to Hannah, but he got little reward from her for his pains.

She was, as it were, always watching him with a sort of secret discontent. He did not suit her—was not congenial to her. Especially was she exasperated now more than ever by his bookish tastes. Possibly she was doubly jealous of his books; at any rate, unless he had been constantly on his guard, she would have hidden them, or done them a mischief whenever she could, in her teasing, magpie way.

One morning, in the grey summer dawn, Louie had just wakened, and was staring sleepily at the door, when, all of a sudden, it opened—very quietly, as though pushed by some one anxious not to make a noise—and Reuben's head looked round it. Louie, amazed, woke up in earnest, and Reuben came stealthily in. He had his hat and stick under his arm, and one hand held his boots, while he stepped noiselessly in his stocking feet across the room to where Louie lay—'Louie, are yo awake?'

The child stared up at him, seeing mostly his stubble of red hair, which came like a grotesque halo between her and the wall. Then she nodded.

'Doan't let yor aunt hear nothin, Louie. She thinks I'm gone out to th' calves. But, Louie, that merchant I towd yo on came yesterday, an he wor a hard un, he wor—as tough as nails, a sight worse nor owd Croker to deal wi, ony day in th' week. I

could mak nowt on him—an he gan me sich a poor price, I darn't tak a penny on 't from your aunt—noa, I darn't, Louie,—not if it wor iver so. She'll be reet down mad when she knaws—an I'm real sorry about that bit dress o' yourn, Louie.'

He stood looking down at her, his spectacles falling forward on his nose, the corners of his mouth drooping—a big ungainly culprit.

For a second or two the child was quite still, nothing but the black eyes and tossed masses of hair showing above the sheet. Then the eyes blinked suddenly, and flinging out her hand at him with a passionate gesture, as though to push him away, she turned on her face and drew the bedclothes over her head.

'Louie!' he said—'Louie!'

But she made no sign, and, at last, with a grotesquely concerned face, he went out of the room and downstairs, hanging his head.

Out of doors, he found David already at work in the cowhouse, but as surly and uncommunicative as before when he was spoken to. That the lad had turned 'agen his wark,' and was on his way to hate the farm and all it contained, was plain even to Reuben. Why was he so glum and silent—why didn't he speak up? Perhaps he would, Reuben's conscience replied, if it were conveyed to him that he possessed a substantial portion of six hundred pounds!

The boy knew that his uncle watched him—anxiously, as one watches something explosive and incalculable—and felt a sort of contempt for himself that nothing practical came of his own revolt and discontent. But he was torn with indecision. How to leave Louie—what to do with himself without a farthing in the world—whom to go to for advice? He thought often of Mr. Ancrum, but a fierce distaste for chapels and ministers had been growing on him, and he had gradually seen less and less of the man who had been the kind comrade and teacher of his early childhood. His only real companions during this year of moody adolescence were his books. From the forgotten deposit in the old meal-ark upstairs, which had yielded 'Paradise Lost,' he drew other treasures by degrees. He found there, in all, some tattered leaves—three or four books altogether—of Pope's 'Iliad,' about half of Foxe's 'Martyrs'—the rest having been used apparently by the casual nurses, who came to tend Reuben's poor mother in her last days, to light the fire—a complete copy of Locke 'On the Human Understanding,' and various volumes of old Calvinist sermons, which he read, partly because his reading appetite was insatiable, partly from a half-contemptuous desire to find out what it might be that Uncle Reuben was always troubling his head about.

As to 'Lias Dawson, David saw nothing of him for many long weeks after the scene which had led to the adventure of the Pool. He heard only that 'Lias was 'bad,' and mostly in his bed, and

feeling a little guilty, he hardly knew why, the lad kept away from his old friend.

Summer and the early autumn passed away. October brought a spell of wintry weather; and one day, as he was bringing the sheep home, he met old Margaret, 'Lias's wife. She stopped and accosted him.

'Why doan't yo coom and see 'Lias sometimes, Davy, my lad? Yo might leeten him up a bit, an' he wants it, t' Lord knows. He's been fearfu' bad in his sperrits this summer.'

The lad stammered out some sheepish excuses, and soon made his way over to Frimley Moor. But the visits were not so much pleasure as usual. 'Lias was very feeble, and David had a constant temptation to struggle with. He understood that to excite 'Lias, to throw him again into the frenzy which had begotten the vision of the Pool, would be a cruel act. But all the same he found it more and more difficult to restrain himself, to keep back the questions which burnt on his tongue.

As for 'Lias, his half-shut eye would brighten whenever David showed himself at the door, and he would point to a wooden stool on the other side of the fire.

'Sit tha down, lad. Margret, gie him soom tay,' or 'Margret, yo'll just find him a bit oatcake.'

And then the two would fall upon their books together, and the conversation would glide imperceptibly into one of those scenes of half-dramatic impersonation, for which David's relish was still unimpaired.

But the old man was growing much weaker; his inventions had less felicity, less range than of old; and the watchful Margaret, at her loom in the corner, kept an eye on any signs of an undue excitement, and turned out David or any other visitor, neck and crop, without scruple, as soon as it seemed to her that her crippled seer was doing himself a mischief. Poor soul! she had lived in this tumult of 'Lias's fancies year after year, till the solid world often turned about her. And she, all the while, so simple, so sane—the ordinary good woman, with the ordinary woman's hunger for the common blessings of life—a little love, a little chat, a little prosaic well-being! She had had two sons—they were gone. She had been the proud wife 'o' t' cliverest mon atwixt Sheffield an Manchester,' as Frimley and the adjacent villages had once expressed it, when every mother that respected herself sent her children to 'Lias Dawson's school. And the mysterious chances of a summer night had sent home upon her hands a poor incapable, ruined in mind and body, who was to live henceforward upon her charity, wandering amid the chaotic wreck and débris of his former self.

Well, she took up her burden!

The straggling village on Frimley Moor was mainly inhabited by a colony of silk hand-loom weavers—the descendants of French prisoners in the great war, and employed for the most part by a firm at Leek. Very dainty work was done at Frimley,

and very beautiful stuffs made. The craft went from father to son. All Margaret's belongings had been weavers; but 'Lias, in the pride of his schoolmaster's position, would never allow his wife to use the trade of her youth. When he became dependent on her, Margaret bought a disused loom from a cousin, had it mended and repaired, and set to work. Her fingers had not forgotten their old cunning; and when she was paid for her first 'cut,' she hurried home to 'Lias with a reviving joy in her crushed heart. Thenceforward, she lived at her loom; she became a skilled and favoured worker, and the work grew dear to her—first, because 'Lias lived on it, and, next, because the bright roses and ribbon-patterns she wove into her costly stuffs were a perpetual cheer to her. The moors might frown outside, the snow might drift against the cottage walls: Margaret had always something gay under her fingers, and threw her shuttle with the more zest the darker and colder grew the Derbyshire world without.

Naturally the result of this long concentration of effort had been to make the poor soul, for whom each day was lived and fought, the apple of Margaret's eye. So long as that bent, white form sat beside her fire, Margaret was happy. Her heart sank with every fresh sign of age and weakness, revived with every brighter hour. He still lorded it over her often, as he had done in the days of their prosperity, and whenever this old mood came back upon him, Margaret could have cried for pleasure.

The natural correlative of such devotion was a drying up of interest in all the world beside. Margaret had the selfishness of the angelic woman—everything was judged as it affected her idol. So at first she took no individual interest in David—he cheered up 'Lias—she had no other thought about him.

On a certain November day David was sitting opposite to 'Lias. The fire burnt between them, and on the fire was a griddle, whereon Margaret had just deposited some oatcakes for tea. The old man was sitting drooped in his chair, his chin on his breast, his black eyes staring beyond David at the wall. David was seized with curiosity—what was he thinking about?—what did he see? There was a mystery, a weirdness about the figure, about that hungry gaze, which tormented him. His temptation returned upon him irresistibly.

''Lias,' he said, bending forward, his dark cheek flushing with excitement, 'Louie and I went up, Easter Eve, to t' Pool, but we went to sleep an saw nowt. What was't yo saw, 'Lias? Did yo see her for sure?'

The old man raised his head frowning, and looked at the boy. But the frown was merely nervous, he had heard nothing. On the other hand, Margaret, whom David had supposed to be in the back kitchen, but who was in reality a few steps behind him, mending something which had gone wrong in her loom, ran forward suddenly to the fire, and bending over her griddle somehow promptly threw down the tongs, making a clatter and commo-

tion, in the midst of which the cakes caught, and old 'Lias moved from the fender, saying fretfully,

'Yo're that orkard wi things, Margret, yo're like a dog dancin.'

But in the bustle Margaret had managed to say to David, 'Howd your tongue, noddle-yed, will yo?'

And so unexpected was the lightning from her usually mild blue eyes that David sat dumbfounded, and presently sulkily got up to go. Margaret followed him out and down the bit of garden.

And at the gate, when they were well out of hearing of 'Lias, she fell on the boy with a torrent of words, gripping him the while with her long thin hand, so that only violence could have released him. Her eyes flamed at him under the brown woollen shawl she wore pinned under her chin; the little emaciated creature became a fury. What did he come there for, 'moiderin 'Lias wi his divilments'? If he ever said a word of such things again, she'd lock the door on him, and he might go to Jenny Crum for his tea. Not a bite or a sup should he ever have in her house again.

'I meant no harm,' said the boy doggedly. 'It wor he towd me about t' witch—it wor he as put it into our yeds—Louie an me.'

Margaret exclaimed. So it was he that got 'Lias talking about the Pool in the spring! Some one had been 'cankin wi him about things they didn't owt'—that she knew—'and she might ha thowt it wor' Davy. For that one day's 'worritin ov him' she had had him on her hands for weeks—off his sleep, and off his feed, and like a blighted thing. 'Aye, it's aw play to yo,' she said, trembling all through in her passion, as she held the boy—'it's aw play to yo and your minx of a sister. An if it means deein to the old man hissel, *yo* don't care! "Margaret," says the doctor to me last week, "if you can keep his mind quiet he may hang on a bit. But you munna let him excite hissel about owt—he mun tak things varra easy. He's like a wilted leaf—nobbut t' least thing will bring it down. He's worn varra thin like, heart an lungs, and aw t' rest of him." An d' yo think I'st sit still an see yo *murder* him—the poor lamb—afore my eyes—me as ha got nowt else but him i' t' wide warld? No—yo yoong varlet—goo an ast soom one else about Jenny Crum if yo 're just set on meddlin wi divil's wark—but yo 'll no trouble my 'Lias.'

She took her hands off him, and the boy was going away in a half-sullen silence, when she caught him again.

'Who towd yo about 'Lias an t' Pool, nobbut 'Lias hissel?'

'Uncle Reuben towd me summat.'

'Aye, Reuben Grieve—he put him in t' carrier's cart, an behaved moor like a Christian nor his wife—I allus mind that o' Reuben Grieve, when foak coe him a foo. Wal, I'st tell yo, Davy, an if iver yo want to say a word about Jenny Crum in our house afterwards, yo mun ha a gritstone whar your heart owt to be—that's aw.'

And she leant over the wall of the little garden, twisting her apron in her old, tremulous hands, and choking down the tears which had begun to rise. Then, looking straight before her, and in a low, plaintive voice, which seemed to float on hidden depths of grief, she told her story.

It appeared that 'Lias had been 'queer' a good while before the adventure of the Pool. But, according to his wife, 'he wor that cliver on his good days, foak could mak shift wi him on his bad days;' the school still prospered, and money was still plentiful. Then, all of a sudden, the moorland villages round were overtaken by an epidemic of spirit-rapping and table-turning. 'It wor sperrits here, sperrits there, sperrits everywhere—t' warld wor gradely swarmin wi 'em,' said Margaret bitterly. It was all started, apparently, by a worthless 'felly' from Castleton, who had a great reputation as a medium, and would come over on summer evenings to conduct séances at Frimley and the places near. 'Lias, already in an excitable, overworked state, was bitten by the new mania, and could think of nothing else.

One night he and the Castleton medium fell talking about Jenny Crum, the witch of Kinder Scout, and her Easter Eve performances. The medium bet 'Lias a handsome sum that he would not dare face her. 'Lias, piqued and wrathful, and 'wi moor yell on board nor he could reetly stan,' took the bet. Margaret heard nothing of it. He announced on Easter Eve that he was going to a brother in Edale for the Sunday, and gave her the slip. She saw no more of him till the carrier brought home to her, on the Sunday morning, a starved and pallid object—'gone clean silly, an hutched thegither like an owd man o' seventy—he bein fifty-six by his reet years.' With woe and terror she helped him to his bed, and in that bed he stayed for more than a year, while everything went from them—school and savings, and all the joys of life.

'An yo'll be wantin to know, like t' rest o' 'em, what he saw!' cried Margaret angrily, facing round upon the boy, whose face was, indeed, one question. '"Margaret, did he tell tha what t' witch said to un?"—every blatherin idiot i' th' parish asked me that, wi his mouth open, till I cud ha stopped my ears an run wheniver I seed a livin creetur. What do I keer?—what doos it matter to me what he saw? I doan't bleeve he saw owt, if yo ast *me*. He wor skeert wi his own thinkins, an th' cowd gripped him i' th' in'ards, an twisted him as yo may twist a withe of hay—Aye! it wor a *cruel* neet. When I opened t' door i' t' early mornin, t' garden wor aw black—th' ice on t' reservoir wor inches thick. Mony a year afterwards t' foak round here ud talk o' that for an April frost. An my poor 'Lias—lost on that fearfu Scout—sleepin out wi'out a rag to cover him, an skeert soomhow—t' Lord or t' Devil knows how! And then foak ud have me mak a good tale out o' it—soomthin to gie 'em a ticklin down their back-bane—soomthin to pass an evenin—*Lord!*'

The wife's voice paused abruptly on this word of imprecation,

or appeal, as though her own passion choked her. David stood beside her awkwardly, his eyes fixed on the gravel, wherewith one foot was playing. There was no more sullenness in his expression.

Margaret's hand still played restlessly with the handkerchief. Her eyes were far away, her mind absorbed by the story of her own fate. Round the moorside, on which the cottage was built, there bent a circling edge of wood, now aflame with all the colour of late autumn. Against its deep reds and browns, Margaret's small profile was thrown out—the profile already of the old woman, with the meeting nose and chin, the hollow cheek, the maze of wrinkles round the eyes. Into that face, worn by the labour and the grief of the poor—into that bending figure, with the peasant shawl folded round the head and shoulders—there had passed all the tragic dignity which belongs to the simple and heartfelt things of human life, to the pain of helpless affection, to the yearning of irremediable loss.

The boy beside her was too young to feel this. But he felt more, perhaps, than any other lad of the moorside could have felt. There was, at all times, a natural responsiveness in him of a strange kind, vibrating rather to pain than joy. He stood by her, embarrassed, yet drawn to her—waiting, too, as it seemed to him, for something more that must be coming.

'An then,' said Margaret at last, turning to him, and speaking more quietly, but still in a kind of tense way, 'then, when 'Lias wor took bad, yo know, Davy, I had my boys. Did yo ever hear tell o' what came to 'em, Davy?'

The boy shook his head.

'Ah!' she said, catching her breath painfully, 'they're moast forgotten, is my boys. 'Lias had been seven weeks i' his bed, an I wor noan so mich cast down—i' those days I had a sperrit more 'n most. I thowt th' boys ud keer for us—we'd gien em a good bringin up, an they wor boath on 'em larnin trades i' Manchester. Yan evenin—it wor that hot we had aw t' doors an windows open—theer came a man runnin up fro t' railway. An my boys were kilt, Davy—boath on 'em—i' Duley Moor Tunnel. They wor coomin to spend Sunday wi us, an it wor an excursion train—I niver knew t' reets on 't!'

She paused and gently wiped away her tears. Her passion had all ebbed.

'An I thowt if I cud ha got 'em home an buried 'em, Davy, I could ha borne it better. But they wor aw crushed, an cut about, an riddlet to bits—they wudna let me ha em. And so we kep it fro 'Lias. Soomtimes I think he knows t' boys are dead—an then soomtimes he frets 'at they doan't coom an see him. Fourteen year ago! An I goo on tellin him they'll coom soon. An last week, when I towd him it, I thowt to mysel it wor just th' naked truth!'

David leant over the gate, pulling at some withered hollyhocks beside it. But when, after a minute of choking silence, Margaret

caught his look, she saw, though he tried to hide it, that his black eyes were swimming. Her full heart melted altogether.

'Oh, Davy, I meant naw offence!' she said, catching him by the arm again. 'Yo're a good lad, an yo're allus a welcome seet to that poor creetur. But yo'll not say owt to trouble him again, laddie—will yo? If he'd yeerd yo just now—but, by t' Lord's blessin, he did na—he'd ha worked himsel up fearfu'! I'd ha had naw sleep wi him for neets—like it wor i' th' spring. Yo munna—yo munna! He's all I ha—his livin 's my livin, Davy—an when he's took away—why, I'll mak shift soomhow to dee too!'

She let him go, and, with a long sigh, she lifted her trembling hands to her head, put her frilled cap straight and her shawl. She was just moving away, when something of a different sort struck her sensitive soul, and she turned again. She lived for 'Lias, but she lived for her religion too, and it seemed to her she had been sinning in her piteous talk.

'Dinna think, Davy,' she said hurriedly, 'as I'm complainin o' th' Lord's judgments. They're aw mercies, if we did but know. An He tempers th' wind—He sends us help when we're droppin for sorrow. It worn't for nothin He made us all o' a piece. Theer's good foak i' th' warld—aye, theer is! An what's moor, theer's soom o' th' best mak o' foak gooin about dressed i' th' worst mak o' clothes. Yo'll find it out when yo want 'em.'

And with a clearing face, as of one who takes up a burden again and adjusts it anew more easily, she walked back to the house.

David went down the lane homewards, whistling hard. But once, as he climbed a stile and sat dangling his legs a moment on the top, he felt his eyes wet again. He dashed his hand impatiently across them. At this stage of youth he was constantly falling out with and resenting his own faculty of pity, of emotion. The attitude of mind had in it a sort of secret half-conscious terror of what feeling might do with him did he but give it head. He did not want to feel—feeling only hurt and stabbed—he wanted to enjoy, to take in, to discover—to fling the wild energies of mind and body into some action worthy of them. And because he had no knowledge to show him how, and a wavering will, he suffered and deteriorated.

The Dawsons, indeed, became his close friends. In Margaret there had sprung up a motherly affection for the handsome lonely lad; and he was grateful. He took her 'cuts' down to the Clough End office for her; when the snow was deep on the Scout, and Reuben and David and the dogs were out after their sheep night and day, the boy still found time to shovel the snow from Margaret's roof and cut a passage for her to the road. The hours he spent this winter by her kitchen fire, chatting with 'Lias, or eating havercakes, or helping Margaret with some household work, supplied him for the first time with something of what his youth was, in truth, thirsting for—the common kindliness of natural affection.

But certainly, to most observers, he seemed to deteriorate. Mr. Ancrum could make nothing of him. David held the minister at arm's-length, and meanwhile rumours reached him that 'Reuben Grieve's nevvy' was beginning to be much seen in the public-houses; he had ceased entirely to go to chapel or Sunday school; and the local gossips, starting perhaps from a natural prejudice against the sons of unknown and probably disreputable mothers, prophesied freely that the tall, queer-looking lad would go to the bad.

All this troubled Mr. Ancrum sincerely. Even in the midst of some rising troubles of his own he found the energy to button-hole Reuben again, and torment him afresh on the subject of a trade for the lad.

Reuben, flushed and tremulous, went straight from the minister to his wife—with the impetus of Mr. Ancrum's shove, as it were, fresh upon him. Sitting opposite to her in the back kitchen, while she peeled her potatoes with a fierce competence and energy which made his heart sick within him, Reuben told her, with incoherent repetitions of every phrase, that in his opinion the time had come when Mr. Gurney should be written to, and some of Sandy's savings applied to the starting of Sandy's son in the world.

There was an ominous silence. Hannah's knife flashed, and the potato-peelings fell with a rapidity which fairly paralysed Reuben. In his nervousness, he let fall the name of Mr. Ancrum. Then Hannah broke out. '*Some* foo',' she knew, had been meddling, and she might have guessed that fool was Mr. Ancrum. Instead of defending her own position, she fell upon Reuben and his supporter with a rhetoric whereof the moral flavour was positively astounding. Standing with the potato-bowl on one hip and a hand holding the knife on the other, she delivered her views as to David's laziness, temper, and general good-for-nothingness. If Reuben chose to incur the risks of throwing such a young lout into town-wickedness, with no one to look after him, let him; she'd be glad enough to be shut on him. But, as to writing to Mr. Gurney and that sort of talk, she wasn't going to bandy words—not she; but nobody had ever meddled with Hannah Grieve's affairs yet and found they had done well for themselves.

'An I wouldna advise yo, Reuben Grieve, to begin now—no, I wouldna. I gie yo fair noatice. Soa theer's not enough for t' lad to do, Mr. Ancrum, he thinks? Perhaps he'll tak th' place an try? I'd not gie him as mich wage as ud fill his stomach i' th' week—noa, I'd not, not if yo wor to ask *me*—a bletherin windy chap as iver I saw. I'd as soon hear a bird-clapper preach as him—theer'd be more sense an less noise! An they're findin it out down theer—we'st see th' back on him soon.'

And to Reuben, looking across the little scullery at his wife, at the harsh face shaken with the rage which these new and intolerable attempts of her husband to dislodge the yoke of years excited in her, it was as though like Christian and Hopeful he

were trying to get back into the Way, and found that the floods had risen over it.

When he was out of her sight, he fell into a boundless perplexity. Perhaps she was right, after all. Mr. Ancrum was a meddler and he an ass. When next he saw David, he spoke to the boy harshly, and demanded to know where he went loafing every afternoon. Then, as the days went on, he discovered that Hannah meant to visit his insubordination upon him in various unpleasant ways. There were certain little creature comforts, making but small show on the surface of a life of general abstinence and frugality, but which, in the course of years, had grown very important to Reuben, and which Hannah had never denied him. They were now withdrawn. In her present state of temper with her better half, Hannah could not be 'fashed' with providing them. And no one could force her to brew him his toddy at night, or put his slippers to warm, or keep his meals hot and tasty for him, if some emergency among the animals made him late for his usual hours—certainly not the weak and stammering Reuben. He was at her mercy, and he chafed indescribably under her unaccustomed neglect.

As for Mr. Ancrum, his own affairs, poor soul, soon became so absorbing that he had no thoughts left for David. There were dissensions growing between him and the 'Christian Brethren.' He spoke often at the Sunday meetings—too often, by a great deal, for the other shining lights of the congregation. But his much speaking seemed to come rather of restlessness than of a full 'experience,' so torn, subtle, and difficult were the things he said. Grave doubts of his doctrine were rising among some of the 'Brethren'; a mean intrigue against him was just starting among others, and he himself was tempest-tossed, not knowing from week to week whether to go or stay.

Meanwhile, as the winter went on, he soon perceived that Reuben Grieve's formidable wife was added to the ranks of his enemies. She came to chapel, because for a Christian Brother or Sister to go anywhere else would have been a confession of weakness in the face of other critical and observant communities—such, for instance, as the Calvinistic Methodists, or the Particular Baptists—not to be thought of for a moment. But when he passed her, he got no greeting from her; she drew her skirts aside, and her stony eye looked beyond him, as though there were nothing on the road. And the sharp-tongued things she said of him came round to him one by one. Reuben, too, avoided the minister, who, a year or two before, had brought fountains of refreshing to his soul, and in the business of the chapel, of which he was still an elder, showed himself more inarticulate and confused than ever. While David, who had won a corner in Mr. Ancrum's heart since the days of their first acquaintance at Sunday-school—David fled him altogether, and would have none of his counsel or his friendship. The alienation of the Grieves made another and a bitter drop in the minister's rising cup of failure.

So the little web of motives and cross-motives, for the most part of the commonest earthiest hue, yet shot every here and there by a thread or two of heavenlier stuff, went spinning itself the winter through round the unknowing children. The reports which had reached Mr. Ancrum were true enough. David was, in his measure, endeavouring to 'see life.' On a good many winter evenings the lad, now nearly fifteen, and shooting up fast to man's stature, might have been seen among the topers at the 'Crooked Cow,' nay, even lending an excited ear to the Secularist speakers, who did their best to keep things lively at a certain low public kept by one Jerry Timmins, a Radical wag, who had often measured himself both in the meeting-houses and in the streets against the local preachers, and, according to his own following, with no small success. There was a covered skittle-ground attached to this house in which, to the horrid scandal of church and chapel, Sunday dances were sometimes held. A certain fastidious pride, and no doubt a certain conscience towards Reuben, kept David from experimenting in these performances, which were made as demonstratively offensive to the pious as they well could be without attracting the attention of the police.

But at the disputations between Timmins and a succession of religious enthusiasts, ministers and others, which took place on the same spot during the winter and spring, David was frequently present.

Neither here, however, nor at the 'Crooked Cow' did the company feel the moody growing youth to be one of themselves. He would sit with his pint before him, silent, his great black eyes roving round the persons present. His tongue was sharp on occasion, and his fists ready, so that after various attempts to make a butt of him he was generally let alone. He got what he wanted—he learnt to know what smoking and drinking might be like, and the jokes of the taproom. And all by the help of a few shillings dealt out to him this winter for the first time by Reuben, who gave them to him with a queer deprecating look and an injunction to keep the matter secret from Hannah. As to the use the lad made of them, Reuben was as ignorant as he was of all other practical affairs outside his own few acres.

CHAPTER VII

SPRING came round again and the warm days of June. At Easter time David had made no further attempts to meet with Jenny Crum on her midnight wanderings. The whole tendency of his winter's mental growth, as well perhaps of the matters brutally raised and crudely sifted in Jerry Timmins's parlour, had been towards a harder and more sceptical habit of mind. For the moment the supernatural had no thrill in it for an intelligence full of contradictions. So the poor witch, if indeed she 'walked,' revisited her place of pain unobserved of mortal eye.

About the middle of June David and his uncle went, as usual, to Kettlewell and Masholme, in Yorkshire, for the purpose of bringing home from thence some of that hardier breed of sheep which was required for the moorland, a Scotch breed brought down yearly to the Yorkshire markets by the Lowland farmers beyond the border. This expedition was an annual matter, and most of the farmers in the Kinder Valley and thereabouts joined in it. They went together by train to Masholme, made their purchases, and then drove their sheep over the moors home, filling the wide ferny stretches and the rough upland road with a patriarchal wealth of flocks, and putting up at night at the village inns, while their charges strayed at will over the hills. These yearly journeys had always been in former years a joy to David. The wild freedom of the walk, the change of scene which every mile and every village brought with it, the resistance of the moorland wind, the spring of the moorland turf, every little incident of the road, whether of hardship or of rough excess, added fuel to the flame of youth, and went to build up the growing creature.

This year, however, that troubling of the waters which was going on in the boy was especially active during the Masholme expedition. He kept to himself and his animals, and showed such a gruff unneighbourly aspect to the rest of the world that the other drivers first teased and then persecuted him. He fought one or two pitched battles on the way home, showed himself a more respectable antagonist, on the whole, than his assailants had bargained for, and was thenceforward contemptuously sent to Coventry. 'Yoong man,' said an old farmer to him once reprovingly, after one of these 'rumpuses,' '*yor* temper woan't mouldy wi keepin.' Reuben coming by at the moment threw an unhappy glance at the lad, whose bruised face and torn clothes showed he had been fighting. To the uncle's mind there was a wanton, nay, a ruffianly look about him, which was wholly new. Instead of rebuking the culprit, Reuben slouched away and put as much road as possible between himself and Davy.

One evening, after a long day on the moors, the party came, late in the afternoon, to the Yorkshire village of Haworth. To David it was a village like any other. He was already mortally tired of the whole business—of the endless hills, the company, the bleak grey weather. While the rest of the party were mopping brows and draining ale-pots in the farmers' public, he was employing himself in aimlessly kicking a stone about one of the streets, when he was accosted by a woman of the shopkeeping class, a decent elderly woman, who had come out for a mouthful of air, with a child dragging after her.

'Yoong mester, yo've coom fro a distance, hannot yo?'

The woman's tone struck the boy pleasantly as though it had been a phrase of cheerful music. There was a motherliness in it —a something, for which, perhaps all unknown to himself, his secret heart was thirsting.

'Fro Masholme,' he said, looking at her full, so that she

could see all the dark, richly coloured face she had had a curiosity to see; then he added abruptly, 'We're bound Kinder way wi t' sheep—reet t'other side o' t' Scout.'

The woman nodded. 'Aye, I know a good mony o' your Kinder foak. They've coom by here a mony year passt. But I doan't know as I've seen yo afoor. Yo're nobbut a yoong 'un. Eh, but we get sich a sight of strangers here now, the yan fairly drives the tother out of a body's mind.'

'Doos foak coom for t' summer?' asked David, lifting his eyebrows a little, and looking round on the bleak and straggling village.

'Noa, they coom to see the church. Lor' bless ye!' said the good woman, following his eyes towards the edifice and breaking into a laugh, ''taint becos the church is onything much to look at. 'Taint nowt out o' t' common that I knows on. Noa—but they coom along o' t' monument, an' Miss Brontë—Mrs. Nicholls, as should be, poor thing—rayder.'

There was no light of understanding in David's face, but his penetrating eyes, the size and beauty of which she could not help observing, seemed to invite her to go on.

'You niver heerd on our Miss Brontë?' said the woman, mildly. 'Well, I spose not. She was just a bit quiet body. Nobbody hereabouts saw mich in her. But she wrote bukes—tales, yo know—tales about t' foak roun here; an they do say, them as has read 'em, 'at they're terr'ble good. Mr. Watson, at t' Post Office, he's read 'em, and he's allus promised to lend 'em me. But soomhow I doan't get th' time. An in gineral I've naw moor use for a book nor a coo has for clogs. But she's terr'ble famous, is Miss Brontë, now—an her sisters too, pore young women. Yo should see t' visitors' book in th' church. Aw t' grand foak as iver wor. They cooms fro Lunnon a purpose, soom ov 'em, an they just takes a look roun t' place, an writes their names, an goos away. Would yo like to see th' church?' said the good-natured creature—looking at the tall lad beside her with an admiring scrutiny such as every woman knows she may apply to any male. 'I'm goin that way, an it's my brother 'at has th' keys.'

David accompanied her with an alacrity which would have astonished his usual travelling companions, and they mounted the straggling village street together towards the church. As they neared it the woman stopped and, shading her eyes against the sunlight, pointed up to it and the parsonage.

'Noa, it's not a beauty, isn't our church. They do say our parson ud like to have it pulled clean down an a new one built. Onyways, they're goin to clear th' Brontës' pew away, an sich a rumpus as soom o' t' Bradford papers have bin makin, and a gradely few o' t' people here too! I doan't know t' reets on 't missel, but I'st be sorry when yo conno see ony moor where Miss Charlotte an Miss Emily used to sit o' Sundays—An theer's th' owd house. Yo used to be 'lowed to see Miss Charlotte's room,

where she did her writin, but they tell me yo can't be let in now. Seems strange, doan't it, 'at onybody should be real fond o' that place? When yo go by it i' winter, soomtimes, it lukes that lonesome, with t' churchyard coomin up close roun it, it's enoof to gie a body th' shivers. But I do bleeve, Miss Charlotte she could ha kissed ivery stone in 't; an they do say, when she came back fro furrin parts, she 'd sit an cry for joy, she wor that partial to Haworth. It's a place yo do get to favour soomhow,' said the good woman, apologetically, as though feeling that no stranger could justly be expected to sympathise with the excesses of local patriotism.

'Did th' oother sisters write books?' demanded David, his eyes wandering over the bare stone house towards which the passionate heart of Charlotte Brontë had yearned so often from the land of exile.

'Bless yo, yes. An theer's mony foak 'at think Miss Emily wor a deol cliverer even nor Miss Charlotte. Not but what yo get a bad noshun o' Yorkshire folk fro Miss Emily's bukes—soa I'm towd. Bit there's rough doins on t' moors soomtimes, I'll uphowd yo! An Miss Emily had eyes like gimlets—they seed reet through a body. Deary me,' she cried, the fountain of gossip opening more and more, 'to think I should ha known 'em in pinafores, Mr. Patrick an aw!'

And under the stress of what was really a wonder at the small beginnings of fame—a wonder which much repetition of her story had only developed in her—she poured out upon her companion the history of the Brontës; of that awful winter in which three of that weird band—Emily, Patrick, Anne—fell away from Charlotte's side, met the death which belonged to each, and left Charlotte alone to reap the harvest of their common life through a few burning years; of the publication of the books; how the men of the Mechanics' Institute (the roof of which she pointed out to him) went crazy over 'Shirley'; how everybody about 'thowt Miss Brontë had bin puttin ov 'em into prent,' and didn't know whether to be pleased or piqued; how, as the noise made by 'Jane Eyre' and 'Shirley' grew, a wave of excitement passed through the whole countryside, and people came from Halifax, and Bradford, and Huddersfield—'aye, an Lunnon soomtoimes'—to Haworth church on a Sunday, to see the quiet body at her prayers who had made all the stir; how Mr. Nicholls, the curate, bided his time and pressed his wooing; how he won her as Rachel was won; and how love did but open the gate of death, and the fiery little creature—exhausted by such an energy of living as had possessed her from her cradle—sank and died on the threshold of her new life. All this Charlotte Brontë's townswoman told simply and garrulously, but she told it well because she had felt and seen.

'She wor so sma' and nesh; nowt but a midge. Theer was no lasst in her. Aye, when I heerd the bell tolling for Miss Charlotte that Saturday mornin,' said the speaker, shaking her head as she

moved away towards the church, 'I cud ha sat down an cried my eyes out. But if she'd ha seen me she'd ha nobbut said, "Martha, get your house straight, an doan't fret for me!" She had sich a sperrit, had Miss Charlotte. Well, now, after aw, I needn't go for t' keys, for th' church door's open. It's Bradford early closin day, yo see, an I dessay soom Bradford foak's goin over.'

So she marched him in, and there indeed was a crowd in the little ugly church, congregated especially at the east end, where the Brontës' pew still stood awaiting demolition at the hands of a reforming vicar. As David and his guide came up they found a young weaver in a black coat, with a sallow oblong face, black hair, high collars, and a general look of Lord Byron, haranguing those about him on the iniquity of removing the pews, in a passionate undertone, which occasionally rose high above the key prescribed by decorum. It was a half-baked eloquence, sadly liable to bathos, divided, indeed, between sentences ringing with the great words 'genius' and 'fame,' and others devoted to an indignant contemplation of the hassocks in the old pews, 'the touching and well-worn implements of prayer,' to quote his handsome description of them, which a meddlesome parson was about to 'hurl away,' out of mere hatred for intellect and contempt of the popular voice.

But, half-baked or no, David rose to it greedily. After a few moments' listening, he pressed up closer to the speaker, his broad shoulders already making themselves felt in a crowd, his eyes beginning to glow with the dissenter's hatred of parsons. In the full tide of discourse, however, the orator was arrested by an indignant sexton, who, coming quickly up the church, laid hold upon him.

'No speechmakin in the church, if you *please*, sir. Move on if yo're goin to th' vestry, sir, for I'll have to shut up directly.'

The young man stared haughtily at his assailant, and the men and boys near closed up, expecting a row. But the voice of authority within its own gates is strong, and the champion of outraged genius collapsed. The whole flock broke up and meekly followed the sexton, who strode on before them to the vestry.

'William's a rare way wi un,' said his companion to David, following her brother's triumph with looks of admiration. 'I thowt that un wud ha bin harder to shift.'

David, however, turned upon her with a frown. "*'Tis* a black shame,' he said; 'why conno they let t' owd pew bide?'

'Ah, weel,' said the woman with a sigh, 'as I said afore, I'st be reet sorry when Miss Charlotte's seat's gone. But yo conno ha brawlin i' church. William's reet enough there.'

And beginning to be alarmed lest she should be raising up fresh trouble for William in the person of this strange, foreign-looking lad, with his eyes like 'live birds,' she hurried him on to the vestry, where the visitors' books were being displayed. Here the Byronic young man was attempting to pick a fresh quarrel

with the sexton, by way of recovering himself with his party. But he took little by it ; the sexton was a tough customer. When the local press was shaken in his face, the vicar's hireling, a canny, weather-beaten Yorkshireman, merely replied with a twist of the mouth,

'Aye, aye, th' newspapers talk--there'd be soombody goin hoongry if they didn't ;' or—'Them 'at has to eat th' egg knaws best whether it is addled or no—to my thinkin,' and so on through a string of similar aphorisms which finally demolished his antagonist.

David meanwhile was burning to be in the fray. He thought of some fine Miltonic sayings to hurl at the sexton, but for the life of him he could not get them out. In the presence of that indifferent, sharp-faced crowd of townspeople his throat grew hot and dry whenever he thought of speaking.

While the Bradford party struggled out of the church, David, having somehow got parted from the woman who had brought him in, lingered behind, before that plain tablet on the wall, whereat the crowd which had just gone out had been worshipping.

EMILY, aged 29.

ANNE, aged 27.

CHARLOTTE, in the 39th year of her age.

The church had grown suddenly quite still. The sexton was outside, engaged in turning back a group of Americans, on the plea that visiting hours were over for the day. Through the wide-open door the fading yellow light streamed in, and with it a cool wind which chased little eddies of dust about the pavement. In the dusk the three names—black on the white—stood out with a stern and yet piteous distinctness. The boy stood there feeling the silence—the tomb near by—the wonder and pathos of fame, and all that thrill of undefined emotion to which youth yields itself so hungrily.

The sexton startled him by tapping him on the shoulder. 'Time to go home, yoong man. My sister she told me to say good neet to yer, and she wishes yo good luck wi your journey. Where are yo puttin up?'

'At the "Brown Bess,"' murmured the boy ungraciously, and hurried out. But the good man, unconscious of repulse and kindly disposed towards his sister's waif, stuck to him, and, as they walked down the churchyard together, the difference between the manners of official and those of private life proved to be so melting to the temper that even David's began to yield. And a little incident of the walk mollified him completely. As they turned a corner they came upon a bit of waste land, and there in the centre of an admiring company was the sexton's enemy, mounted on a bit of wall, and dealing out their deserts in fine style to those meddling parsons and their underlings who despised genius and took no heed of the relics of the mighty dead.

The sexton stopped to listen when they were nearly out of range, and was fairly carried away by the 'go' of the orator.

'Doan't he do it nateral!' he said with enthusiasm to David, after a passage specially and unflatteringly devoted to himself. 'Lor' bless yo, it don't hurt me. But I do loike a bit o' good speakin, 'at I do. If fine worrds wor penny loaves, that yoong gen'leman ud get a livin aisy! An as for th' owd pew, I cud go skrikin about th' streets mysel, if it ud do a ha'porth o' good.'

David's brow cleared, and, by the time they had gone a hundred yards further, instead of fighting the good man, he asked a favour of him.

'D' yo think as theer's onybody in Haworth as would lend me a seet o' yan o' Miss Brontë's tales for an hour?' he said, reddening furiously, as they stopped at the sexton's gate.

'Why to be sure, mon,' said the sexton cheerily, pleased with the little opening for intelligent patronage. 'Coom your ways in, and we'll see if we can't oblige yo. I've got a tidy lot o' books in my parlour, an I can give yo "Shirley," I know.'

David went into the stone-built cottage with his guide, and was shown in the little musty front room a bookcase full of books which made his eyes gleam with desire. The half-curbed joy and eagerness he showed so touched the sexton that, after inquiring as to the lad's belongings, and remembering that in his time he had enjoyed many a pipe and 'glass o' yell' with 'owd Reuben Grieve' at the 'Brown Bess,' the worthy man actually lent him indefinitely three precious volumes—'Shirley,' 'Benjamin Franklin's Autobiography,' and 'Nicholas Nickleby.'

David ran off hugging them, and thenceforward he bore patiently enough with the days of driving and tramping which remained, for the sake of the long evenings when in some lonely corner of moor and wood he lay full length on the grass revelling in one or other of his new possessions. He had a voracious way of tearing out the heart of a book first of all, and then beginning it again with a different and a tamer curiosity, lingering, tasting, and digesting. By the time he and Reuben reached home he had rushed through all three books, and his mind was full of them.

'Shirley' and 'Nicholas Nickleby' were the first novels of modern life he had ever laid hands on, and before he had finished them he felt them in his veins like new wine. The real world had been to him for months something sickeningly narrow and empty, from which at times he had escaped with passion into a distant dream-life of poetry and history. Now the walls of this real world were suddenly pushed back as it were on all sides, and there was an inrush of crowd, excitement, and delight. Human beings like those he heard of or talked with every day—factory hands and mill-owners, parsons, squires, lads and lasses—the Yorkes, and Robert Moore, Squeers, Smike, Kate Nickleby and Newman Noggs, came by, looked him in the eyes, made him take sides, compare himself with them, join in their fights and hatreds, pity and exult with them. Here was something more disturbing, personal, and

stimulating than that mere imaginative relief he had been getting out of 'Paradise Lost,' or the scenes of the 'Jewish Wars'!

By a natural transition the mental tumult thus roused led to a more intense self-consciousness than any he had yet known. In measuring himself with the world of 'Shirley' or of Dickens, he began to realise the problem of his own life with a singular keenness and clearness. Then—last of all—the record of Franklin's life,—of the steady rise of the ill-treated printer's devil to knowledge and power—filled him with an urging and concentrating ambition, and set his thoughts, endowed with a new heat and nimbleness, to the practical unravelling of a practical case.

They reached home again early on a May day. As he and Reuben, driving their new sheep, mounted the last edge of the moor which separated them from home, the Kinder Valley lay before them, sparkling in a double radiance of morning and of spring. David lingered a minute or two behind his uncle. What a glory of light and freshness in the air—what soaring larks—what dipping swallows! And the scents from the dew-steeped heather—and the murmur of the blue and glancing stream!

The boy's heart went out to the valley—and in the same instant he put it from him. An indescribable energy and exultation took possession of him. The tide of will for which he had been waiting all these months had risen; and for the first time he felt swelling within him the power to break with habit, to cut his way.

But what first step to take? Whom to consult? Suddenly he remembered Mr. Ancrum, first with shame, then with hope. Had he thrown away his friend? Rumour said that things were getting worse and worse at chapel, and that Mr. Ancrum was going to Manchester at once.

He ran down the slopes of heather towards home as though he would catch and question Mr. Ancrum there and then. And Louie? Patience! He would settle everything. Meanwhile, he was regretfully persuaded that if you had asked Miss Brontë what could be done with a creature like Louie she would have had a notion or two.

CHAPTER VIII

'Reach me that book, Louie,' said David peremptorily; 'it ull be worse for yo if yo don't.'

The brother and sister were in the smithy. Louie was squatting on the ground with her hands behind her, her lips sharply shut as though nothing should drag a word out of them, and her eyes blazing defiance at David, who had her by the shoulder, and looked to the full as fierce as she looked provoking.

'Find it!' was all she said. He had been absent for a few minutes after a sheep that had got into difficulties in the Red

Brook, and when he returned, his volume of Rollin's 'Ancient History'—'Lias's latest loan—which he had imprudently forgotten to take with him, had disappeared.

David gave her an angry shake, on which she toppled over among the fallen stones with an exasperating limpness, and lay there laughing.

'Oh, very well,' said David, suddenly recovering himself; 'yo keep yor secret. I'st keep mine, that's aw.'

Louie lay quiet a minute or two, laughing artificially at intervals, while David searched the corners of the smithy, turning every now and then to give a stealthy look at his sister.

The bait took. Louie stopped laughing, sat up, put herself straight, and looked about her.

'Yo hain't got a secret,' she said coolly; 'I'm not to be took in wi snuff that way.'

'Very well,' said David indifferently, 'then I haven't.'

And sitting down near the pan, he took out one of the little boats from the hole near, and began to trim its keel here and there with his knife. The occupation seemed to be absorbing.

Louie sat for a while, sucking at a lump of sugar she had swept that morning into the *omnium gatherum* of her pocket. At last she took up a little stone and threw it across at David.

'What's yor silly old secret about, then?'

'Where's my book, then?' replied David, holding up the boat and looking with one eye shut along the keel.

'Iv I gie it yer, an yor secret ain't wo'th it, I'll put soom o' that watter down yor neckhole,' said Louie, nodding towards the place.

'If yo don't happen to find yorsel in th' pan fust,' remarked David unmoved.

Louie sucked at her sugar a little longer, with her hands round her knees. She had thrown off her hat, and the May sun struck full on her hair, on the glossy brilliance of it, and the natural curls round the temples which disguised a high and narrow brow. She no longer wore her hair loose. In passionate emulation of Annie Wigson, she had it plaited behind, and had begged an end of blue ribbon of Mrs. Wigson to tie it with, so that the beautiful arch of the head showed more plainly than before, while the black eyes and brows seemed to have gained in splendour and effectiveness, from their simpler and severer setting. One could see, too, the length of the small neck and of the thin falling shoulders. It was a face now which made many a stranger in the Clough End streets stop and look backward after meeting it. Not so much because of its beauty, for it was still too thin and starved-looking for beauty, as because of a singular daring and brilliance, a sense of wild and yet conscious power it left behind it. The child had grown a great piece in the last year, so that her knees were hardly decently covered by the last year's cotton frock she wore, and her brown sticks of arms were far beyond her sleeves. David had looked at her once or twice lately with a new kind of

scrutiny. He decided that she was a 'rum-looking' creature, not the least like anybody else's sister, and on the whole his raw impression was that she was plain.

'How'll I know yo'll not cheat?' she said at last, getting up and surveying him with her arms akimbo.

'Can't tell, I'm sure,' was all David vouchsafed. 'Yo mun find out.'

Louie studied him threateningly.

'Weel, I'd be even wi yo soomhow,' was her final conclusion; and disappearing through the ruined doorway, she ran down the slope to where one of the great mill-stones lay hidden in the heather, and diving into its central hole, produced the book, keenly watched the while by David, who took mental note of the hiding-place.

'Naw then,' she said, walking up to him with her hands behind her and the book in them, 'tell me yor secret.'

David first forcibly abstracted the book and made believe to box her ears, then went back to his seat and his boat.

'Go on, can't yo!' exclaimed Louie, after a minute, stamping at him.

David laid down his boat deliberately.

'Well, yo won't like it,' he said; 'I know that. But—I'm off to Manchester, that's aw—as soon as I can goo; as soon as iver I can hear of onything. An I'm gooin if I don't hear of onything. I'm gooin onyways; I'm tired o' this. So now yo know.'

Louie stared at him.

'Yo ain't!' she said, passionately, as though she were choking.

David instinctively put up his hands to keep her off. He thought she would have fallen upon him there and then and beaten him for his 'secret.'

But, instead, she flung away out of the smithy, and David was left alone and in amazement. Then he got up and went to look, stirred with the sudden fear that she might have run off to the farm with the news of what he had been saying, which would have precipitated matters unpleasantly.

No one was to be seen from outside, either on the moor path or in the fields beyond, and she could not possibly have got out of sight so soon. So he searched among the heather and the bilberry hummocks, till he caught sight of a bit of print cotton in a hollow just below the quaint stone shooting-hut, built some sixty years ago on the side of the Scout for the convenience of sportsmen. David stalked the cotton, and found her lying prone and with her hat, as usual, firmly held down over her ears. At sight of her something told him very plainly he had been a brute to tell her his news so. There was a strong moral shock which for the moment transformed him.

He went and lifted her up in spite of her struggles. Her face was crimson with tears, but she hit out at him wildly to prevent his seeing them. 'Now, Louie, look here,' he said, holding her

hands, 'I didna mean to tell yo short and sharp like that, but yo do put a body's back up so, there's no bearin it. Don't take on, Louie. I'll coom back when I've found soomthin, an take yo away, too, niver fear. Theer's lots o' things gells can do in Manchester—tailorin, or machinin, or dress-makin, or soomthin like that. But yo must get a bit older, an I must find a place for us to live in, so theer's naw use fratchin, like a spiteful hen. Yo must bide and I must bide. But I'll coom back for yo, I swear I will, an we'll get shut on Aunt Hannah, an live in a little place by ourselves, as merry as larks.'

He looked at her appealingly. Her head was turned sullenly away from him, her thin chest still heaved with sobs. But when he stopped speaking she jerked round upon him.

'Leave me behint, an I'll murder her!'

The child's look was demoniacal. 'No, yo won't,' said David, laughing. 'I' th' fust place, Aunt Hannah could settle a midge like yo wi yan finger. I' th' second, hangin isn't a coomfortable way o' deein. Yo wait till I coom for yo, an when we'st ha got reet away, an can just laugh in her face if she riles us,—*that* 'll spite her mich moor nor murderin.'

The black eyes gleamed uncannily for a moment and the sobbing ceased. But the gleam passed away, and the child sat staring at the moorland distance, seeing nothing. There was such an unconscious animal pain in the attitude, the pain of the creature that feels itself alone and deserted, that David watched her in a puzzled silence. Louie was always mysterious, whether in her rages or her griefs, but he had never seen her sob quite like this before. He felt a sort of strangeness in her fixed gaze, and with a certain timidity he put out his arm and laid it round her shoulder. Still she did not move. Then he slid up closer in the heather, and kissed her. His heart, which had seemed all frostbound for months, melted, and that hunger for love—home-love, mother-love—which was, perhaps, at the very bottom of his moody complex youth, found a voice.

'Louie, couldn't yo be nice to me soomtimes—couldn't yo just take an interest, like, yo know—as if yo cared a bit—couldn't yo? Other gells do. I'm a brute to yo, I know, often, but yo keep aggin an teasin, an theer's niver a bit o' peace. Look here, Loo, yo give up, an I'st give up. Theer's nobbut us two—nawbody else cares a ha'porth about the yan or the tother—coom along! yo give up, an I'st give up.'

He looked at her anxiously. There was a new manliness in his tone, answering to his growing manliness of stature. Two slow tears rolled down her cheeks, but she said nothing. She couldn't for the life of her. She blinked, furiously fighting with her tears, and at last she put up an impatient hand which left a long brown streak across her miserable little face.

'Yo havn't got no trade,' she said. 'Yo'll be clemmed.'

David withdrew his arm, and gulped down his rebuff. 'No, I sha'n't,' he said. 'Now you just listen here.' And he described

how, the day before, he had been to see Mr. Ancrum, to consult him about leaving Kinder, and what had come of it.

He had been just in time. Mr. Ancrum, worn, ill, and harassed to death, had been cheered a little during his last days at Clough End by the appearance of David, very red and monosyllabic, on his doorstep. The lad's return, as he soon perceived, was due simply to the stress of his own affairs, and not to any knowledge of or sympathy with the minister's miseries. But, none the less, there was a certain balm in it for Mr. Ancrum, and they had sat long discussing matters. Yes, the minister was going—would look out at Manchester for an opening for David, in the bookselling trade by preference, and would write at once. But Davy must not leave a quarrel behind him. He must, if possible, get his uncle's consent, which Mr. Ancrum thought would be given.

'I'm willing to lend you a hand, Davy,' he had said, 'for you're on the way to no trade but loafing as you are now; but square it with Grieve. You can, if you don't shirk the trouble of it.'

Whereupon Davy had made a wry face and said nothing. But to Louie he expressed himself plainly enough.

'I'll not say owt to oather on 'em,' he said, pointing to the chimneys of the farm, 'till the day I bid 'em good-bye. Uncle Reuben, mebbe, ud be for givin me somethin to start wi, an Aunt Hannah ud be for cloutin him over the head for thinkin of it. No, I'll not be beholden to yan o' them. I've got a shillin or two for my fare, an I'll keep mysel.'

'What wages ull yo get?' inquired Louie sharply.

'Nothin very fat, that's sure,' laughed David. 'If Mr. Ancrum can do as he says, an find me a place in a book-shop, they'll, mebbe, gie me six shillin to begin wi.'

'An what ull yo do wi 'at?'

'Live on't,' replied David briefly.

'Yo conno, I tell yo! Yo'll ha food an firin, cloos, an lodgin to pay out o't. Yo conno do 't—soa theer.'

Louie looked him up and down defiantly. David was oddly struck with the practical knowledge her remark showed. How did such a wild imp know anything about the cost of lodging and firing?

'I tell yo I'll live on't,' he replied with energy; 'I'll get a room for half a crown—two shillin, p'r'aps—an I'll live on sixpence a day, see if I don't.'

'See if yo do!' retorted Louie, 'clemm on it more like.'

'That's all *yo* know about it, miss,' said David, in a tone, however, of high good humour; and, stretching one of his hands down a little further into his trousers pocket, he drew out a paper-covered book, so that just the top of it appeared. 'Yo're allus naggin about books. Well; I tell yo, I've got an idea out o' thissen ull be worth shillins a week to me. It's about Benjamin Franklin. Never yo mind who Benjamin Franklin wor; but he

wor a varra cute soart of a felly; an when he wor yoong, an had nobbut a few shillins a week, he made shift to save soom o' them shillins, becos he found he could do without eatin *flesh meat*, an that wi bread an meal an green stuff, a mon could do very well, an save soom brass every week. When I go to Manchester,' continued David emphatically, 'I shall niver touch meat. I shall buy a bag o' oatmeal like Grandfeyther Grieve lived on, boil it for mysel, wi a sup o' milk, perhaps, an soom salt or treacle to gi it a taste. An I'll buy apples an pears an oranges cheap soomwhere, an store 'em. Yo mun ha a deal o' fruit when yo doan't ha meat. Fourpence!' cried Davy, his enthusiasm rising, 'I'll live on *thruppence* a day, as sure as yo're sittin theer! Seven thruppences is one an nine; lodgin, two shillin—three an nine. Two an three left over, for cloos, firin, an pocket money. Why, I'll be rich before yo can look roun! An then, o' coorse, they'll not keep me long on six shillins a week. In the book-trade I'll soon be wuth ten, an moor!'

And, springing up, he began to dance a sort of cut and shuffle before her out of sheer spirits. Louie surveyed him with a flushed and sparkling face. The nimbleness of David's wits had never come home to her till now.

'What ull I earn when I coom?' she demanded abruptly.

David stopped his cut and shuffle, and took critical stock of his sister for a moment.

'Now, look here, Louie, yo're goin to stop where yo are, a good bit yet,' he replied decidedly. 'Yo'll have to wait two year or so—moor 'n one, onyways,' he went on hastily, warned by her start and fierce expression. 'Yo know, they can ha th' law on yo,' and he jerked his thumb over his shoulder towards the farm. 'Boys is all reet, but gells can't do nothink till they're sixteen. They mun stay wi th' foak as browt 'em up, an if they run away afore their sixteenth birthday—they gets put in prison.'

David poured out his legal fictions hastily, three parts convinced of them at any rate, and watched eagerly for their effect on Louie.

She tossed her head scornfully. 'Doan't b'lieve it. Yo're jest tellin lees to get shut o' me. Nex summer if yo doan't send for me, I'll run away, whativer yo may say. So yo know.'

'Yo're a tormentin thing!' exclaimed David, exasperated, and began savagely to kick stones down the hill. Then, recovering himself, he came and sat down beside her again.

'I doan't want to get shut on yo, Louie. But yo won't understand nothin.'

He stopped, and began to bite at a stalk of heather, by way of helping himself. His mind was full of vague and yet urgent thoughts as to what became of girls in large towns with no one to look after them, things he had heard said at the public-house, things he had read. He had never dreamt of leaving Louie to Aunt Hannah's tender mercies. Of course he must take her away when he could. She was his charge, his belonging. But all the

same she was a 'limb'; in his opinion she always would be a 'limb.' How could he be sure of her getting work, and who on earth was to look after her when he was away?

Suddenly Louie broke in on his perplexities.

'I'll go tailorin,' she cried triumphantly. 'Now I know—it wor t' Wigsons' cousin Em'ly went to Manchester; an she earned nine shillin a week—nine shillin I tell yo, an found her own thread. Yo'll be takin ten shillin, yo say, nex year? an I'll be takin nine. That's nineteen shillin fur th' two on us. *Isn't* it nineteen shillin?' she said peremptorily, seizing his arm with her long fingers.

'Well, I dessay it is,' said David, reluctantly. 'An precious tired yo'll be o' settin stitchin mornin, noon, an neet. Like to see yo do 't.'

'I'd do it fur nine shillin,' she said doggedly, and sat looking straight before her, with wide glittering eyes. She understood from David's talk that, what with meal, apples, and greenstuff, your 'eatin' need cost you nothing. There would be shillings and shillings to buy things with. The child who never had a copper but what Uncle Reuben gave her, who passed her whole existence in greedily coveting the unattainable and in chafing under the rule of an iron and miserly thrift, felt suddenly intoxicated by this golden prospect of illimitable 'buying.' And what could possibly prevent its coming true? Any fool—such as 'Wigson's Em'ly'—could earn nine shillings a week at tailoring; and to make money at your stomach's expense seemed suddenly to put you in possession of a bank on which the largest drawings were possible. It all looked so ingenious, so feasible, so wholly within the grip of that indomitable will the child felt tense within her.

So the two sat gazing out over the moorland. It was the first summer day, fresh and timid yet, as though the world and the sun were still ill-acquainted. Down below, over the sparkling brook, an old thorn was quivering in the warm breeze, its bright thin green shining against the brown heather. The larches alone had as yet any richness of leaf, but the sycamore-buds glittered in the sun, and the hedges in the lower valley made wavy green lines delightful to the eye. A warm soft air laden with moist scents of earth and plant bathed the whole mountain-side, and played with Louie's hair. Nature wooed them with her best, and neither had a thought or a look for her.

Suddenly Louie sprang up.

'Theer's Aunt Hannah shoutin. I mun goo an get t' coos.'

David ran down the hill with her.

'What'll yo do if I tell?' she inquired maliciously at the bottom.

'If yo do I shall cut at yance, an yo'll ha all the longer time to be by yoursen.'

A darkness fell over the girl's hard shining gaze. She turned away abruptly, then, when she had gone a few steps, turned and

came back to where David stood whistling and calling for the dogs. She caught him suddenly from behind round the neck. Naturally he thought she was up to some mischief, and struggled away from her with an angry exclamation. But she held him tight and thrust something hard and sweet against his lips. Involuntarily his mouth opened and admitted an enticing cake of butter-scotch. She rammed it in with her wiry little hand so that he almost choked, and then with a shrill laugh she turned and fled, leaping down the heather between the boulders, across the brook, over the wall, and out of sight.

David was left behind, sucking. The sweetness he was conscious of was not all in the mouth. Never that he could remember had Louie shown him any such mark of favour.

Next day David was sent down with the donkey-cart to Clough End to bring up some weekly stores for the family, Hannah specially charging him to call at the post-office and inquire for letters. He started about nine o'clock, and the twelve o'clock dinner passed by without his reappearance.

When she had finished her supply of meat and suet-pudding, after a meal during which no one of the three persons at table had uttered a word, Louie abruptly pushed her plate back again towards Hannah.

'David!' was all she said.

'Mind your manners, miss,' said Hannah, angrily. 'Them as cooms late gets nowt.' And, getting up, she cleared the table and put the food away with even greater rapidity than usual. The kitchen was no sooner quite clear than the donkey-cart was heard outside, and David appeared, crimsoned with heat, and panting from the long tug uphill, through which he had just dragged the donkey.

He carried a letter, which he put down on the table. Then he looked round the kitchen.

'Aunt's put t' dinner away,' said Louie, shortly, ''cos yo came late.'

David's expression changed. 'Then nex time she wants owt, she can fetch it fro Clough End hersel,' he said violently, and went out.

Hannah came forward and laid eager hands on the letter, which was from London, addressed in a clerk's hand.

'Louie!' she called imperatively, 'tak un out soom bread-an-drippin.'

Louie put some on a plate, and went out with it to the cow-house, where David sat on a stool, occupying himself in cutting the pages of a number of the *Vegetarian News*, lent him in Clough End, with trembling hands, while a fierce red spot burnt in either cheek.

'Tak it away!' he said, almost knocking the plate out of Louie's hands; 'it chokes me to eat a crumb o' hers.'

As Louie was bearing the plate back through the yard, Uncle

Reuben came by. 'What's—what's 'at?' he said, peering short-sightedly at what she held. Every month of late Reuben's back had seemed to grow rounder, his sight less, and his wits of less practical use.

'Summat for David,' said Louie, shortly, ''cos Aunt Hannah woan't gie him no dinner. But he woan't ha it.'

Reuben's sudden look of trouble was unmistakable. 'Whar is he?'

'I' th' coo-house.'

Reuben went his way, and found the dinnerless boy deep, or apparently deep, in recipes for vegetable soups.

'What made yo late, Davy?' he asked him, as he stood over him.

David had more than half a mind not to answer, but at last he jerked out fiercely, 'Waitin for th' second post, fust; then t' donkey fell down half a mile out o' t' town, an th' things were spilt. There was nobody about, an' I had a job to get 'un up at a'.'

Reuben nervously thrust his hands far into his coat-pockets.

'Coom wi me, Davy, an I'st mak yor aunt gie yer yor dinner.'

'I wouldn't eat a morsel if she went down on her bended knees to me,' the lad broke out, and, springing up, he strode sombrely through the yard and into the fields.

Reuben went slowly back into the house. Hannah was in the parlour—so he saw through the half-opened door. He went into the room, which smelt musty and close from disuse. Hannah was standing over the open drawer of an old-fashioned corner cupboard, carefully scanning a letter and enclosure before she locked them up.

'Is 't Mr. Gurney's money?' Reuben said to her, in a queer voice.

She was startled, not having heard him come in, but she put what she held into the drawer all the more deliberately, and turned the key.

'Ay, 't is.'

Reuben sat himself down on one of the hard chairs beside the table in the middle of the room. The light streaming through the shutters Hannah had just opened streamed in on his grizzling head and face working with emotion.

'It's stolen money,' he said hoarsely. 'Yo're stealin it fro Davy.'

Hannah smiled grimly, and withdrew the key.

'I'm paying missel an yo, Reuben Grieve, for t' keep o' two wuthless brats as cost moor nor they pays,' she said, with an accent which somehow sent a shiver through Reuben. '*I* don't keep udder foaks' childer fur nothin.'

'Yo've had moor nor they cost for seven year,' said Reuben, with the same thick tense utterance. 'Yo should let Davy ha it, an gie him a trade.'

Hannah walked up to the door and shut it.

'I should, should I? An who'll pay for Louie—for your luvely limb of a niece? It 'ud tak about that,' and she pointed grimly to the drawer, 'to coover what she wastes an spiles i' t' yeer.'

'Yo get her work, Hannah. Her bit and sup cost yo most nothin. I cud wark a bit moor—soa cud yo. Yo're hurtin me i' mi conscience, Hannah—yo're coomin atwixt me an th' Lord!'

He brought a shaking hand down on the damask table-cloth among the wool mats and the chapel hymn-books which adorned it. His long, loose frame had drawn itself up with a certain dignity.

'Ha done wi your cantin!' said Hannah under her breath, laying her two hands on the table, and stooping down so as to face him with more effect. The phrase startled Reuben with a kind of horror. Whatever words might have passed between them, never yet that he could remember had his wife allowed herself a sneer at his religion. It seemed to him suddenly as though he and she were going fast downhill—slipping to perdition, because of Sandy's six hundred pounds.

But she cowed him—she always did. She stayed a moment in the same bent and threatening position, coercing him with angry eyes. Then she straightened herself, and moved away.

'Let t' lad tak hisself off if he wants to,' she said, an iron resolution in her voice. 'I told yo so afore—I woan't cry for 'im. But as long as Louie's here, an I ha to keep her, I'll want that money, an every penny on't. If it bean't paid, she may go too!'

'Yo'd not turn her out, Hannah?' cried Reuben, instinctively putting out an arm to feel that the door was closed.

'*She*'d not want for a livin,' replied Hannah, with a bitter sneer; 'she's her mither's child.'

Reuben rose slowly, shaking all over. He opened the door with difficulty, groped his way out of the front passage, then went heavily through the yard and into the fields. There he wandered by himself for a couple of hours, altogether forgetting some newly dropped lambs to which he had been anxiously attending. For months past, ever since his conscience had been roused on the subject of his brother's children, the dull, incapable man had been slowly reconceiving the woman with whom he had lived some five-and-twenty years, and of late the process had been attended with a kind of agony. The Hannah Martin he had married had been a hard body indeed, but respectable, upright, with the same moral instincts as himself. She had kept the farm together—he knew that; he could not have lived without her, and in all practical respects she had been a good and industrious wife. He had coveted her industry and her strong will; and, having got the use of them, he had learnt to put up with her contempt for him, and to fit his softer nature to hers. Yet it seemed to him that there had always been certain conditions implied in this subjection of his, and that she was breaking them. He could not have been fetching and carrying all these years for a woman who could

go on wilfully appropriating money that did not belong to her,—who could even speak with callous indifference of the prospect of turning out her niece to a life of sin.

He thought of Sandy's money with loathing. It was like the cursed stuff that Achan had brought into the camp—an evil leaven fermenting in their common life, and raising monstrous growths.

Reuben Grieve did not demand much of himself; a richer and more spiritual nature would have thought his ideals lamentably poor. But, such as they were, the past year had proved that he could not fall below them without a dumb anguish, without a sense of shutting himself out from grace. He felt himself —by his fear of his wife—made a partner in Hannah's covetousness, in Hannah's cruelty towards Sandy's children. Already, it seemed to him, the face of Christ was darkened, the fountain of grace dried up. All those appalling texts of judgment and reprobation he had listened to so often in chapel, protected against them by that warm inward certainty of 'election,' seemed to be now pressing against a bared and jeopardised soul.

But if he wrote to Mr. Gurney, Hannah would never forgive him till her dying day; and the thought of making her his enemy for good put him in a cold sweat.

After much pacing of the upper meadows he came heavily down at last to see to his lambs. Davy was just jumping the wall on to his uncle's land, having apparently come down the Frimley path. When he saw his uncle he thrust his hands into his pockets, began to whistle, and came on with a devil-may-care swing of the figure. They met in a gateway between two fields.

'Whar yo been, Davy?' asked Reuben, looking at him askance, and holding the gate so as to keep him.

'To Dawson's,' said the boy, sharply.

Reuben's face brightened. Then the lad's empty stomach must have been filled; for he knew that 'Dawsons' were kind to him. He ventured to look at him more directly, and, as he did so, something in the attitude of the proud handsome stripling reminded him of Sandy—Sandy, in the days of his youth, coming down to show his prosperous self at the farm. He put his large soil-stained hand on David's shoulder.

'Goo yor ways in, Davy. I'll see yo ha your reets.'

David opened his eyes at him, astounded. There is nothing more startling in human relations than the strong emotion of weak people.

Reuben would have liked to say something else, but his lips opened and shut in vain. The boy, too, was hopelessly embarrassed. At last, Reuben let the gate fall and walked off, with downcast head, to where, in the sheep-pen, he had a few hours before bound an orphan lamb to a refractory foster-mother. The foster-mother's resistance had broken down, she was lying patiently and gently while the thin long-legged creature sucked; when it was frightened away by Reuben's approach she trotted

bleating after it. In his disturbed state of feeling the parallel, or rather the contrast, between the dumb animal and the woman struck home.

CHAPTER IX

BUT the crisis which had looked so near delayed !

Poor Reuben ! The morning after his sudden show of spirit to David he felt himself, to his own miserable surprise, no more courageous than he had been before it. Yet the impression made had gone too deep to end in nothingness. He contracted a habit of getting by himself in the fields and puzzling his brain with figures—an occupation so unfamiliar and exhausting that it wore him a good deal ; and Hannah, when he came in at night, would wonder, with a start, whether he were beginning 'to break up.' But it possessed him more and more. Hannah would not give up the money, but David must have his rights. How could it be done ? For the first time Reuben fell to calculation over his money matters, which he did not ask Hannah to revise. But meanwhile he lived in a state of perpetual inward excitement which did not escape his wife. She could get no clue to it, however, and became all the more forbidding in the household the more she was invaded by this wholly novel sense of difficulty in managing her husband.

Yet she was not without a sense that if she could but contrive to alter her ways with the children it would be well for her. Mr. Gurney's cheque was safely put away in the Clough End bank, and clearly her best policy would have been to make things tolerable for the two persons on whose proceedings—if they did but know it !—the arrival of future cheques in some measure depended. But Hannah had not the cleverness which makes the successful hypocrite. And for some time past there had been a strange unmanageable change in her feelings towards Sandy's orphans. Since Reuben had made her conscious that she was robbing them, she had gone nearer to an active hatred than ever before. And, indeed, hatred in such a case is the most natural outcome ; for it is little else than the soul's perverse attempt to justify to itself its own evil desire.

David, however, when once his rage over Hannah's latest offence had cooled, behaved to his aunt much as he had done before it. He was made placable by his secret hopes, and touched by Reuben's advances—though of these last he took no practical account whatever ; and he must wait for his letter. So he went back ungraciously to his daily tasks. Meanwhile he and Louie, on the strength of the great *coup* in prospect, were better friends than they had ever been, and his consideration for her went up as he noticed that, when she pleased, the reckless creature could keep a secret 'as close as wax.'

The weeks, however, passed away, and still no letter came for

David. The shepherds' meetings—first at Clough End for the Cheshire side of the Scout, and then at the 'Snake Inn' for the Sheffield side—when the strayed sheep of the year were restored to their owners, came and went in due course; sheep-washing and sheep-shearing were over; the summer was halfway through; and still no word from Mr. Ancrum.

David, full of annoyance and disappointment, was seething with fresh plans—he and Louie spent hours discussing them at the smithy—when suddenly an experience overtook him, which for the moment effaced all his nascent ambitions, and entirely did away with Louie's new respect for him.

It was on this wise.

Mr. Ancrum had left Clough End towards the end of June. The congregation to which he ministered, and to which Reuben Grieve belonged, represented one of those curious and independent developments of the religious spirit which are to be found scattered through the teeming towns and districts of northern England. They had no connection with any recognised religious community, but the members of it had belonged to many—to the Church, the Baptists, the Independents, the Methodists. They were mostly mill-hands or small tradesmen, penetrated on the one side with the fervour, the yearnings, the strong formless poetry of English evangelical faith, and repelled on the other by various features in the different sects from which they came—by the hierarchical strictness of the Wesleyan organisation, or the looseness of the Congregationalists, or the coldness of the Church. They had come together to seek the Lord in some way more intimate, more moving, more effectual than any they had yet found; and in this pathetic search for the 'rainbow gold' of faith they were perpetually brought up against the old stumbling-blocks of the unregenerate man,—the smallest egotisms, and the meanest vanities. Mr. Ancrum, for instance, had come to the Clough End 'Brethren' full of an indescribable missionary zeal. He had laboured for them night and day, taxing his sickly frame far beyond its powers. But the most sordid conspiracy imaginable, led by two or three of the prominent members who thought he did not allow them enough share in the evening meetings, had finally overthrown him, and he had gone back to Manchester a bitterer and a sadder man.

After he left there was an interregnum, during which one or two of the elder 'Brethren' taught Sunday school and led the Sunday services. But at last, in August, it became known in Clough End that a new minister for the 'Christian Brethren' had come down, and public curiosity in the Dissenting circles was keen about him. After a few weeks there began to be a buzz in the little town on the subject of Mr. Dyson. The 'Christian Brethren' meeting-room, a long low upper chamber formerly occupied by half a dozen hand-looms, was crowded on Sundays, morning and evening, not only by the Brethren, but by migrants from other denominations, and the Sunday school, which was held in a little

rickety garret off the main room, also received a large increase of members. It was rumoured that Mr. Dyson was specially successful with boys, and that there was an 'awakening' among some of the lowest and roughest of the Clough End lads.

'He ha sich a way wi un,' said a much-stirred mother to Reuben Grieve, meeting him one day in the street, 'he do seem to melt your varra marrow.'

Reuben went to hear the new man, was much moved, and came home talking about him with a stammering unction, and many furtive looks at David. He had tried to remonstrate several times on the lad's desertion of chapel and Sunday school, but to no purpose. There was something in David's half contemptuous, half obstinate silence on these occasions which for a man like Reuben made argument impossible. To his morbid inner sense the boy seemed to have entered irrevocably on the broad path which leadeth to destruction. Perhaps in another year he would be drinking and thieving. With a curious fatalism Reuben felt that for the present, and till he had made some tangible amends to Sandy and the Unseen Powers for Hannah's sin, he himself could do nothing. His hands were unclean. But some tremulous passing hopes he allowed himself to build on this new prophet.

Meanwhile, David heard the town-talk, and took small account of it. He supposed he should see the new comer at Jerry's in time. Then if folk spoke true there would be a shindy worth joining in. Meanwhile, the pressure of his own affairs made the excitement of the neighbourhood seem to him one more of those storms in the Dissenting tea-cup, of which, boy as he was, he had known a good many already.

One September evening he was walking down to Clough End, bound to the reading-room. He had quite ceased to attend the 'Crooked Cow.' His pennies were precious to him now, and he saved them jealously, wondering scornfully sometimes how he could ever have demeaned himself so far as to find excitement in the liquor or the company of the 'Cow.' Half-way down to the town, as he was passing the foundry, whence he had drawn the pan which had for so long made the smithy enchanted ground to him, the big slouching apppentice who had been his quondam friend and ally there, came out of the foundry yard just in front of him. David quickened up a little.

'Tom, whar are yo goin?'

The other looked round at him uneasily.

'Niver yo mind.'

The youth's uncouth clothes were carefully brushed, and his fat face, which wore an incongruous expression of anxiety and dejection, shone with washing. David studied him a moment in silence, then he said abruptly—

'Yo're goin prayer-meetin, that's what yo are.'

'An if I am, it's noa consarn o' yourn. Yo're yan o' th' unregenerate; an I'll ask yo, Davy, if happen yo're goin town

way, not to talk ony o' your carnal talk to me. I'se got hindrances enough, t' Lord knows.'

And the lad went his way, morosely hanging his head, and stepping more rapidly as though to get rid of his companion.

'Well, I niver!' exclaimed David, in his astonishment. 'What's wrong wi yo, Tom? Yo've got no more spunk nor a moultin hen. What's getten hold o' yo?'

Tom hesitated a moment. '*Th' Lord!*' he burst out at last, looking at Davy with that sudden unconscious dignity which strong feeling can bestow for the moment on the meanest of mortals. 'He's a harryin' me! I haven't slep this three neets for shoutin an cryin! It's th' conviction o' *sin*, Davy. Th' devil seems a howdin me, an I conno pull away, not whativer. T' new minister says, "Dunnot yo pull. Let Jesus do 't all. He's strang, He is. Yo're nobbut a worm." But I've naw *assurance*, Davy, theer's whar it is—I've naw assurance!' he repeated, forgetting in his pain the unregenerate mind of his companion.

David walked on beside him wondering. When he had last seen Tom he was lounging in a half-drunken condition outside the door of the 'Crooked Cow,' cracking tipsy jokes with the passers-by.

'Where is the prayer-meetin?' he inquired presently.

'In owd Simes's shed—an it's late too—I mun hurry.'

'Why, theer'll be plenty o' room in old Simes's shed. It's a fearfu big place.'

'An lasst time theer was na stannin ground for a corn-boggart; an I wudna miss ony o' Mr. Dyson's prayin, not for nothin. Good neet to yo, Davy.'

And Tom broke into a run; David, however, kept up with him.

'P'raps I'll coom too,' he said, with a kind of bravado, when they had passed the bridge and the Kinder printing works, and Clough End was in sight.

Tom said nothing till they had breasted a hill, at the top of which he paused panting, and confronted David.

'Noo yo'll not mak a rumpus, Davy,' he said mistrustfully.

'An if I do, can't a hunderd or two o' yo kick me out?' asked David, mockingly. 'I'll mak no rumpus. P'raps yor Mr. Dyson 'll convert me.'

And he walked on laughing.

Tom looked darkly at him; then, as he recovered his wind, his countenance suddenly cleared. Satan laid a new snare for him—poor Tom!—and into his tortured heart there fell a poisonous drop of spiritual pride. Public reprobation applied to a certain order of offences makes a very marketable kind of fame, as the author of *Manfred* knew very well. David in his small obscure way was supplying another illustration of the principle. For the past year he had been something of a personage in Clough End—having always his wits, his book-learning, his looks, and his singular parentage to start from.

Tom—the shambling butt of his comrades—began to like the notion of going into prayer-meeting with David Grieve in tow; and even that bitter and very real cloud of spiritual misery lifted a little.

So they marched in together, Tom in front, with his head much higher than before; and till the minister began there were many curious glances thrown at David. It was a prayer-meeting for boys only, and the place was crammed with them, of all ages up to eighteen.

It was a carpenter's workshop. Tools and timber had been as far as possible pushed to the side, and at the end a rough platform of loose planks had been laid across some logs so as to raise the preacher a little.

Soon there was a stir, and Mr. Dyson appeared. He was tall and loosely built, with the stoop from the neck and the sallow skin which the position of the cotton-spinner at work and the close fluffy atmosphere in which he lives tend to develop. Up to six months ago, he had been a mill-hand and a Wesleyan class-leader. Now, in consequence partly of some inward crisis, partly of revolt against an 'unspiritual' superintendent, he had thrown up mill and Methodism together, and come to live on the doles of the Christian Brethren at Clough End. He had been preaching on the moors already during the day, and was tired out; but the pallor of the harsh face only made the bright, commanding eye more noticeable. It ran over the room, took note first of the numbers, then of individuals, marked who had been there before, who was a new-comer. The audience fell into order and quiet before it as though a general had taken command.

He put his hands on his hips and began to speak without any preface, somewhat to the boys' surprise, who had expected a prayer. The voice, as generally happens with a successful revivalist preacher, was of fine quality, and rich in good South Lancashire intonations, and his manner was simplicity itself.

'Suppose we put off our prayer a little bit,' he said, in a colloquial tone, his fixed look studying the crowded benches all the while. 'Perhaps we'll have more to pray about by-and-by. . . . Well, now, I haven't been long in Clough End, to be sure, but I think I've been long enough to get some notion of how you boys here live—whether you work on the land, or whether you work in the mills or in shops—I've been watching you a bit, perhaps you didn't think it; and what I'm going to do to-night is to take your lives to pieces—take them to pieces, an look close into them, as you've seen them do at the mill, perhaps, with a machine that wants cleaning. I want to find out what's wrong wi them, what they're good for, whose work they do—*God's or the devil's*. . . . First let me take the mill-hands. Perhaps I know most about their life, for I went to work in a cotton-mill when I was eight years old, and I only left it six months ago. I have seen men and women saved in that mill, so that their whole life afterwards was a kind of ecstasy: I have seen others lost there, so

that they became true children of the devil, and made those about them as vile and wretched as themselves. I have seen men grow rich there, and I have seen men die there ; so if there is anything I know in this world it is how factory workers spend their time—at least, I think I know. But judge for yourselves—shout to me if I'm wrong. Isn't it somehow like this ?'

And he fell into a description of the mill-hand's working day. It was done with knowledge, sometimes with humour, and through it all ran a curious undercurrent of half-ironical passion. The audience enjoyed it, took the points, broke in now and then with comments as the speaker touched on such burning matters as the tyranny of overlookers, the temper of masters, the rubs between the different classes of ' hands,' the behaviour of ' minders ' to the ' piecers ' employed by them, and so on. The sermon at one time was more like a dialogue between preacher and congregation. David found himself joining in it involuntarily once or twice, so stimulating was the whole atmosphere, and Mr. Dyson's eye was caught perforce by the tall dark fellow with the defiant carriage of the head who sat next to Tom Mullins, and whom he did not remember to have seen before.

But suddenly the preacher stopped, and the room fell dead silent, startled by the darkening of his look. ' Ay,' he said, with stern sharpness. ' Ay, that's how you live—them's the things you spend your time and your minds on. You laugh, and I laugh—not a bad sort of life, you think—a good deal of pleasure, after all, to be got out of it. If a man must work he might do worse. *O you poor souls !*'

The speaker stopped, as though mastering himself. His face worked with emotion ; his last words had been almost a cry of pain. After the easy give and take of the opening, this change was electrical. David felt his hand tremble on his knee.

' Answer me this ! ' cried the preacher, his nervous cotton-spinner's hand outstretched. ' Is there any soul here among you factory lads who, when he wakes in the morning, *ever thinks of saying a prayer?* Not one of you, I'll be bound ! What with shovelling on one's clothes, and gulping down one's breakfast, and walking half a mile to the mill, who's got time to think about prayers ? God must wait. He's always there above, you think, sitting in glory. He can listen any time. Well, as you stand at your work—all those hours !—is there ever a moment *then* for putting up a word in Jesus' ear—Jesus, Who died for sinners ? Why, no, how should there be indeed ? If you don't keep a sharp eye on your work the overlooker 'ull know the reason why in double-quick time ! . . . But there comes a break, perhaps, for one reason or another. Does the Lord get it ? What a thing to ask, to be sure ! Why, there are other spinners close by, waiting for rovings, or leaving off for " baggin," and a bit of talk and a bad word or two are a deal more fun, and come easier than praying. Half-past five o'clock at last—knocking-off time. Then you begin to think of amusing yourselves. There's loafing

about the streets, which never comes amiss, and there's smoking and the public for you bigger ones, and there's betting on Manchester races, and there's a bout of swearing every now and then to keep up your spirits, and there are other thoughts, and perhaps actions, for some of you, of which the less said in any decent Christian gathering the better! And so bedtime comes round again; still not a moment to think of God in—of the Judgment which has come a day closer—of your sins which have grown a day heavier—of your soul which has sunk a day further from heaven, a day nearer to hell? Not one. You are dead tired, and mill-work begins so early. Tumble in—God can wait. He has waited fourteen, or eighteen, or twenty years already!

'But you're not all factory hands here. I see a good many lads I know come from the country—from the farms up Kinder or Edale way. Well, I don't know so much about your ways as I do about mills; but I know some, and I can guess some. *You* are not shut up all day with the roar of the machines in your ears, and the cotton-fluff choking your lungs. You have to live harder, perhaps. You've less chances of getting on in the world; but I declare to you, if you're bad and godless—as some of you are—I think there's a precious sight less excuse for you than there is for the mill-hands!'

And with a startling vehemence, greater by far than he had shown in the case of the mill-workers, he threw himself on the vices and the callousness of the field-labourers. For were they not, day by day, and hour by hour, face to face with the Almighty in His marvellous world—with the rising of His sun, with the flash of His lightning, with His clouds which dropped fatness, and with the heavens which declare His glory? Nothing between them and the Most High, if they would open their dull eyes and see! And more than that. Not a bit of their life, but had been dear to the Lord Jesus—but He had spoken of it, taught from it, made it sacred. The shepherd herding the sheep—how could he, of all men, forget and blaspheme the Good Shepherd? The sower scattering the seed—how could he, of all men, forget and blaspheme the Heavenly Sower? Oh, the crookedness of sin! Oh, the hardness of men's hearts!

The secret of the denunciations which followed lay hidden deep in the speaker's personal history. They were the utterances of a man who had stood for years at the 'mules,' catching, when he could, through the coarse panes of factory glass, the dim blue outlines of distant moors. *Here* were noise, crowd, coarse jesting, mean tyrannies, uncongenial company—everything which a nervous, excitable nature, tuned to poetry in the English way through religion, most loathed; *there* was beauty, peace, leisure for thought, for holiness, for emotion.

Meanwhile the mind of David Grieve rose once or twice in angry protest. It was not fair—it was unjust—and why did Mr. Dyson always seem to be looking at him?—flinging at him all these scathing words about farming people's sins and follies? He

was shaken and excited. Oratory, of any sort, never failed to stir him extraordinarily. Once even he would have jumped up to speak, but Tom Mullins's watchful hand closed on his arm. Davy shook it off angrily, but was perforce reminded of his promise. And Mr. Dyson was swift in all things. The pitiless sentences dropped; the speaker, exhausted, wiped his brow and pondered a moment; and the lads from the farms about, most of whom David knew by sight, were left staring at the floor, some inclined to laugh by reaction, others crimson and miserable.

Well; so God was everywhere forgotten—in the fields and in the mill. The greedy, vicious hours went by, and God still waited—waited. Would he wait for ever?

'*Nay!*'

The intense, low-spoken word sent a shiver through the room. The revivalist passion had been mounting rapidly amongst the listeners, and the revivalist sense divined what was coming. To his dying day David, at least, never forgot the picture of a sinner's death agony, a sinner's doom, which followed. As to the first, it was very quiet and colloquial. The preacher dwelt on the tortured body, the choking breath, the failing sight, the talk of relations and friends round the bed.

'"Ay, poor fellow, he'll not lasst mich longer; t' doctor's gien him up—and a good thing too, for his sufferins are terr'ble to see."

'And your poor dying ears will catch what they say. Then will your fear come upon you as a storm, and your calamity as a whirlwind. Such a fear!

'Once, my lads—long ago—I saw a poor girl caught by her hair in one of the roving machines in the mill I used to work at. Three minutes afterwards they tore away her body from the iron teeth which had destroyed her. But I, a lad of twelve, had seen her face just as the thing caught her, and if I live to be a hundred I shall never forget that face—that horrible, horrible fear convulsing it.

'But that fear, my boys, was as *nothing* to the sinner's fear at death! Only a few more hours—a few more minutes, perhaps—and then *judgment!* All the pleasant loafing and lounging, all the eating and drinking, the betting and swearing, the warm sun, the kind light, the indulgent parents and friends left behind; nothing for ever and ever but the torments which belong to sin, and which even the living God can no more spare you and me if we die in sin than the mill-engine, once set going, can spare the poor creature that meddles with it.

'Well; but perhaps in that awful last hour you try to pray—to call on the Saviour. But, alas! alas! prayer and faith have to be learnt, like cotton-spinning. Let no man count on learning that lesson for the asking. While your body has been enjoying itself in sin, your soul has been dying—dying; and when at the last you bid it rise and go to the Father, you will find it just as helpless as your poor paralysed limbs. It cannot rise, it has no

strength ; it cannot go, for it knows not the way. No hope ; no hope. Down it sinks, and the black waters of hell close upon it for ever ! '

Then followed a sort of vision of the lost—delivered in short abrupt sentences—the form of the speaker drawn rigidly up meanwhile to its full height, the long arm outstretched. The utterance had very little of the lurid materialism, the grotesque horror of the ordinary ranter's hell. But it stole upon the imagination little by little, and possessed it at last with an all-pervading terror. Into it, to begin with, had gone the whole life-blood and passion of an agonised soul. The man speaking had himself graven the terrors of it on his inmost nature through many a week of demoniacal possession. But since that original experience of fire which gave it birth, there had come to its elaboration a strange artistic instinct. Day after day the preacher had repeated it to hushed congregations, and with every repetition, almost, there had come a greater sharpening of the light and shade, a keener sense of what would tell and move. He had given it on the moors that afternoon, but he gave it better to-night, for on the wild walk across the plateau of the Peak some fresh illustrations, drawn from its black and fissured solitude, had suggested themselves, and he worked them out as he went, with a kind of joy, watching their effect. Yet the man was, in his way, a saint, and altogether sincere—so subtle a thing is the life of the spirit.

In the middle, Tom Mullins, David's apprentice-friend, suddenly broke out into loud groans, rocking himself to and fro on the form. A little later, a small fair-haired boy of twelve sprang up from the form where he had been sitting trembling, and rushed into the space between the benches and the preacher, quite unconscious of what he was doing.

'Sir !' he said ; 'oh, sir !—please—I didn't want to say them bad words this mornin ; I didn't, sir ; it wor t' big uns made me ; they said they'd duck me—an it do hurt that bad. Oh, sir, please !'

And the little fellow stood wringing his hands, the tears coursing down his cheeks.

The minister stopped, frowning, and looked at him. Then a smile broke on the set face, he stepped up to the lad, threw his arm round him, and drew him up to his side fronting the room.

'My boy,' he said, looking down at him tenderly, 'you and I, thank God, are still in the land of the *living ;* there is still time to-night—this very minute—to be saved ! Ay, saved, for ever and ever, by the blood of the Lamb. Look away from yourselves —away from sin—away from hell—to the blessed Lord, that suffered and died and rose again ; just for what ? For this only —that He might, with His own pierced hands, draw every soul here to-night, and every soul in the wide world that will but hear His voice, out of the clutches of the devil, and out of the pains of hell, and gather it close and safe into His everlasting arms !'

There was a great sob from the whole room. Rough lads from the upland farms, shop-boys, mill-hands, strained forward, listening, thirsting, responding to every word.

Redemption—Salvation—the deliverance of the soul from itself—thither all religion comes at last, whether for the ranter or the philosopher. To the enriching of that conception, to the gradual hewing it out in historical shape, have gone the noblest poetry, the purest passion, the intensest spiritual vision of the highest races, since the human mind began to work. And the historical shape may crumble; but the need will last and the travail will go on; for man's quest of redemption is but the eternal yielding of the clay in the hands of the potter, the eternal answer of the creature to the urging indwelling Creator.

CHAPTER X

Half an hour later, after the stormy praying and singing which had succeeded Mr. Dyson's address, David found himself tramping up the rough and lonely road leading to the high Kinder valley. The lights of Clough End had disappeared; against the night sky the dark woody side of Mardale Moor was still visible; beneath it sang the river; a few stars were to be seen; and every now and then the windows of a farm shone out to guide the wayfarer. But David stumbled on, noticing nothing. At the foot of the steep hill leading to the farm he stopped a moment, and leant over the gate. The little lad's cry was in his ears.

Presently he leapt the gate impatiently, and ran up whistling. Supper was over, but Hannah ungraciously brought him out some cold bacon and bread. Louie hung about him while he ate, studying him with quick furtive eyes.

'Whar yo bin?' she said abruptly, when Hannah had gone to the back kitchen for a moment. Reuben was dozing by the fire over the local paper.

'Nowhere as concerns yo,' said David, shortly. He finished his supper and went and sat on the steps. The dogs came and put their noses on his knees. He pulled absently at their coats, looking straight before him at the dark point of Kinder Low.

'Whar yo bin?' said Louie's voice again in his ear. She had squatted down on the step behind him.

'Be off wi yer,' said David, angrily, getting up in order to escape her.

But she pursued him across the farmyard.

'Have yo got a letter?'

'No, I haven't.'

'Did yo ask at t' post-office?'

'No, I didn't.'

'An why didn't yo?'

'Because I didn't want—soa there—get away.' And he

stalked off. Louie, left behind, chewed the cud of reflection in the darkness.

Presently, to his great disgust, as he was sitting under a wall of one of the pasture-fields, hidden, as he conceived, from all the world by the night, he heard the rustle of a dress, the click of a stone, and there was Louie dangling her legs above him, having attacked him in the rear.

'Uncle Reuben's talkin 'is stuff about Mr. Dyson. I seed 'im gooin passt Wigsons' this afternoon. He's nowt—he's common, he is.'

The thin scornful voice out of the dark grated on him intolerably. He bent forward and shut his ears tight with both his hands. To judge from the muffled sounds he heard, Louie went on talking for a while; but at last there had been silence for so long, that he took his hands away, thinking she must have gone.

'Yo've been at t' prayer-meetin, I tell yo, an yo're a great stupid muffin-yed, soa theer.'

And a peremptory little kick on his shoulder from a substantial shoe gave the words point.

He sprang up in a rage, ran down the hill, jumped over a wall or two, and got rid of her. But he seemed to hear her elfish laugh for some time after. As for himself, he could not analyse what had come over him. But not even the attraction of an unopened parcel of books he had carried home that afternoon from Clough End—a loan from a young stationer he had lately made acquaintance with—could draw him back to the farm. He sat on and on in the dark. And when at last, roused by the distant sounds of shutting up the house, he slunk in and up to bed, he tossed about for a long time, and woke up often in the night. The tyrannous power of another man's faith was upon him. He could not get Mr. Dyson out of his head. How on earth could anybody be so *certain?* It was monstrous that any one should be. It was canting stuff.

Still, next day, hearing by chance that the new comer was going to preach at a hamlet the other side of Clough End, he went, found a large mixed meeting mostly of mill-hands, and the tide of Revivalism rolling high. This time Mr. Dyson picked him out at once—the face and head indeed were easily remembered. After the sermon, when the congregation were filing out, leaving behind those more particularly distressed in mind to be dealt with more intimately in a small prayer-meeting by Mr. Dyson and a prayer-leader, the minister suddenly stepped aside from a group of people he was talking with, and touched David on the arm as he was making for the door.

'Won't you stay?' he said peremptorily. 'Don't trifle with the Lord.'

And his feverish divining eyes seemed to look the boy through and through. David flushed, and pushed past him with some inarticulate answer. When he found himself in the open air he was half angry, half shaken with emotion. And afterwards a

curious instinct, the sullen instinct of the wild creature shrinking from a possible captor, made him keep himself as much as possible out of Mr. Dyson's way. At the prayer-meetings and addresses, which followed each other during the next fortnight in quick succession, David was almost always present; but he stood at the back, and as soon as the general function was over he fled. The preacher's strong will was piqued. He began to covet the boy's submission disproportionately, and laid schemes for meeting with him. But David evaded them all.

Other persons, however, succeeded better. Whenever the revivalist fever attacks a community, it excites in a certain number of individuals, especially women, an indescribable zeal for proselytising. The signs of 'conviction' in any hitherto unregenerate soul are marked at once, and the 'saved' make a prey of it, showing a marvellous cunning and persistence in its pursuit.

One day a woman, the wife of a Clough End shoemaker, slightly known to David, met him on the moors.

'Will yo coom to-night?' she said, nodding to him. 'Theer'll be prayin' at our house—about half a dozen.'

Then, as the boy stopped, amazed and hesitating, she fixed him with her shining ecstatic eyes.

'Awake, thou that sleepest,' she said under her breath, 'and Christ shall give thee light.'

She had been carrying a bundle to a distant farm. A child was in her arms, and she looked dragged and worn. But all the way down the moor as she came towards him David had heard her singing hymns.

He hung his head and passed on. But in the evening he went, found three or four other boys his own age or older, the woman, and her husband. The woman sang some of the most passionate Methodist hymns; the husband, a young shoemaker, already half dead of asthma and bronchitis, told his 'experiences' in a voice broken by incessant coughing; one of the boys, a rough specimen, known to David as a van-boy from some calico-printing works in the neighbourhood, prayed aloud, breaking down into sobs in the middle; and David, at first obstinately silent, found himself joining before the end in the groans and 'Amens,' by force of a contagious excitement he half despised but could not withstand.

The little prayer-meeting, however, broke up somewhat in confusion. There was not much real difference of opinion at this time in Clough End, which was, on the whole, a strongly religious town. Even the Churchmanship of it was decidedly evangelical, ready at any moment to make common cause with Dissent against Ritualism, if such a calamity should ever threaten the little community, and very ready to join, more or less furtively, in the excitements of Dissenting revivals. Jerry Timmins and his set represented the only serious blot on what the pious Clough Endian might reasonably regard as a fair picture. But this set contained some sharp fellows—provided outlet for a con-

siderable amount of energy of a raw and roving sort, and, no doubt, did more to maintain the mental equilibrium of the small factory-town than any enthusiast on the other side would for a moment have allowed. The excitement which followed in the train of a man like Mr. Dyson roused, of course, an answering hubbub among the Timminsites. The whole of Jerry's circle was stirred up, in fact, like a hive of wasps ; their ribaldry grew with what it fed on ; and every day some new and exquisite method of harrying the devout occurred to the more ingenious among them.

David had hitherto escaped notice. But on this evening, while he and his half-dozen companions were still on their knees, they were first disturbed by loud drummings on the shoemaker's door, which opened directly into the little room where they were congregated ; and then, when they emerged into the street, they found a mock prayer-meeting going on outside, with all the usual 'manifestations' of revivalist fervour—sighs, groans, shouts, and the rest of it—in full flow. At the sight of David Grieve there were first stares and then shrieks of laughter.

'I say, Davy,' cried a drunken young weaver, sidling up to him on his knees and embracing him from behind, 'my heart's real touched. Gie me yor coat, Davy ; it's better nor mine, Davy ; and I'm yor Christian brother, Davy.'

The emotion of this appeal drew uproarious merriment from the knot of Secularists. David, in a frenzy, kicked out, so that his assailant dropped him with a howl. The weaver's friends closed upon the 'Ranters,' who had to fight their way through. It was not till they had gained the outskirts of the town that the shower of stones ceased, and that they could pause to take stock of their losses. Then it appeared that, though all were bruised, torn, and furious, some were inclined to take a mystical joy in persecution, and to find compensation in certain plain and definite predictions as to the eternal fate in store for 'Jerry Timmins's divils.' David, on the other hand, was much more inclined to vent his wrath on his own side than on the Timminsites.

'Why can't yo keep what yo're doin to yorsels?' he called out fiercely to the knot of panting boys, as he faced round upon them at the gate leading to the Kinder road. 'Yo're a parcel o' fools—always chatterin and clatterin.'

The others defended themselves warmly. 'Them Timmins lot' were always spying about. They daren't attack the large meetings, but they had a diabolical way of scenting out the small ones. The meetings at the shoemaker's had been undisturbed for some few nights, then a Timminsite passing by had heard hymns, probably listened at the keyhole, and of course informed the main body of the enemy.

'They're like them nassty earwigs,' said one boy in disgust, 'they'll wriggle in onywheres.'

'Howd yor noise!' said David, peremptorily. 'If yo wanted to keep out o' their way, yo could do 't fasst enough.'

'How!' they inquired, with equal curtness.

'Yo needn't meet in th' town at aw. Theer's plenty o' places up on t' moor,' and he waved his hand towards the hills behind him, lying clear in the autumn moonlight. 'Theer's th' owd smithy—who'd find yo there?'

The mention of the smithy was received as an inspiration. There is a great deal of pure romantic temper roused by these revivalistic outbreaks in provincial England. The idea of the moors and the old ruin as setting for a secret prayer-meeting struck the group of excited lads as singularly attractive. They parted cheerfully upon it, in spite of their bruises.

David, however, walked home fuming. The self-abandonment of the revival had been all along wellnigh intolerable to him—and now, that he should have allowed the Timminsites to know anything about his prayers! He very nearly broke off from it altogether in his proud disgust.

However he did ultimately nothing of the sort. As soon as he grew cool again, he was as much tormented as before by what was at bottom more an intellectual curiosity than a moral anguish. There was *some* moral awakening in it; he had some real qualms about sin, some real aspirations after holiness, and, so far, the self-consciousness which had first stirred at Haworth was deepened and fertilised. But the thirst for emotion and sensation was the main force at work. He could not make out what these religious people meant by their 'experiences,' and for the first time he wanted to make out. So when it was proposed to him to meet at the smithy on a certain Saturday evening, he agreed.

Meanwhile, Louie was sitting up in bed every night, with her hands round her sharp knees, and her black brows knit over David's follies. It seemed to her he no longer cared 'a haporth' about getting a letter from Mr. Ancrum, about going to Manchester, about all those entrancing anti-meat schemes which were to lead so easily to a paradise of free 'buying' for both of them. Whenever she tried to call him back to these things he shook her off impatiently, and their new-born congeniality to each other had been all swamped in this craze for 'shoutin hollerin' people she despised with all her heart. When she flew out at him, he just avoided her. Indeed, he avoided her now at all times, whether she flew out or not. There was an invincible heathenism about Louie, which made her the natural enemy of any 'awakened' person.

The relation of the elders in the farm to the new development in David was a curious one. Hannah viewed it with a secret satisfaction. Christians have less time than other people—such, at least, had been her experience with Reuben—to spend in thirsting for the goods of this world. The more David went to prayer-meetings, the less likely was he to make inadmissible demands on what belonged to him. As for poor Reuben, he seemed to have got his wish; while he and Hannah had been

doing their best to drive Sandy's son to perdition through a downward course of 'loafing,' God had sent Mr. Dyson to put Davy back on the right road. But he was ill at ease; he watched the excitement, which all the lad's prickly reticence could not hide from those about him, with strange and variable feelings. As a Christian, he should have rejoiced; instead, the uncle and nephew shunned each other more than ever, and shunned especially all talk of the revival. Perhaps the whole situation—the influence of the new man, of the local talk, of the quickened spiritual life around him, did but aggravate the inner strain in Reuben. Perhaps his wife's satisfaction, which his sharpened conscience perceived and understood, troubled him intolerably. At any rate, his silence and disquiet grew, and his only pleasure lay, more than ever, in those solitary cogitations we have already spoken of.

The 15th of October approached—as it happened, the Friday before the smithy prayer-meeting. On that day of the year, according to ancient and invariable custom, the Yorkshire stock—steers, heifers, young horses—which are transferred to the Derbyshire farms on the 15th of May, are driven back to their Yorkshire owners, with all the fatness of Derbyshire pastures showing on their sleek sides. Breeders and farmers meet again at Woodhead, just within the Yorkshire border. The animals are handed over to their owners, paid for at so much a head, and any preventible damage or loss occurring among them is reckoned against the farmer returning them, according to certain local rules.

As the middle of the month came nearer, Reuben began to talk despondently to Hannah of his probable gains from his Yorkshire 'boarders.' It had been a cold wet summer; he was 'feart' the owners would think he might have taken more care of some of the animals, especially of the young horses, and he mentioned certain ailments springing from damp and exposure for which he might be held responsible. Hannah grew irritated and anxious. The receipts from this source were the largest they could reckon upon in the year. But the fields on which the Yorkshire animals pastured were at some distance from the house; this department of the farm business was always left wholly to Reuben; and, with much grumbling and scolding, she took his word for it as to the probable lowness of the sum he should bring back.

David, meanwhile, was sometimes a good deal puzzled by Reuben's behaviour. It seemed to him that his uncle told some queer tales at home about their summer stock. And when Reuben announced his intention of going by himself to Woodhead, and leaving David at home, the boy was still more astonished.

However, he was glad enough to be spared the tramp with a set of people whose ways and talk were more and more uncongenial to him; and after his uncle's departure he lay for hours hidden from Louie among the heather, sometimes arguing out imaginary

arguments with Mr. Dyson, sometimes going through passing thrills of emotion and fear. What was meant, he wanted to know, by '*the sense of pardon*'? Person after person at the prayer-meetings he had been frequenting had spoken of attaining it with ecstasy, or of being still shut out from it with anguish. But how, after all, did it differ from pardoning yourself? You had only, it seemed to him, to think very hard that you were pardoned, and the feeling came. How could anybody tell it was more than that? David racked his brain endlessly over the same subject. Who could be sure that 'experience' was not all moonshine? But he was as yet much too touched and shaken by what he had been going through to draw any trenchant conclusions. He asked the question, however, and therein lay the great difference between him and the true stuff of Methodism.

Meanwhile, in his excitement, he, for the first time, ceased to go to the Dawsons' as usual. To begin with, they dropped out of a mind which was preoccupied with one of the first strong emotions of adolescence. Then, some one told him casually that 'Lias was more ailing than usual, and that Margaret was in much trouble. He was pricked with remorse, but just because Margaret would be sure to question him, a raw shyness came in and held him back from the effort of going.

On the Saturday evening David, having ingeniously given Louie the slip, sped across the fields to the smithy. It was past five o'clock, and the light was fading. But the waning gold of the sunset as he jumped the wall on to the moor made the whole autumnal earth about him, and the whole side of the Scout, one splendour. Such browns and pinks among the withering ling; such gleaming greens among the bilberry leaf; such reds among the turning ferns; such fiery touches on the mountain ashes overhanging the Red Brook! The western light struck in great shafts into the bosom of the Scout; and over its grand encompassing mass hung some hovering clouds just kindling into rosy flame. As the boy walked along he saw and thrilled to the beauty which lay spread about him. His mood was simple, and sweeter than usual. He felt a passionate need of expression, of emotion. There was a true disquiet, a genuine disgust with self at the bottom of him, and God seemed more than imaginatively near. Perhaps, on this day of his youth, of all days, he was closest to the Kingdom of Heaven.

At the smithy he found about a dozen persons, mostly youths, just come out from the two or three mills which give employment to Clough End, and one rather older than the rest, a favourite prayer-leader in Sunday meetings. At first, everything felt strange; the boys eyed one another; even David as he stepped in among them had a momentary reaction, and was more conscious of the presence of a red-haired fellow there with whom he had fought a mighty fight on the Huddersfield expedition, than of any spiritual needs.

However, the prayer-leader knew his work. He was slow and pompous; his tone with the Almighty might easily have roused a hostile sense of humour; but Dissent in its active and emotional forms kills the sense of humour; and, besides, there was a real, ungainly power in the man. Every phrase of his opening prayer was hackneyed; every gesture uncouth. But his heart was in it, and religious conviction is the most infectious thing in the world. He warmed, and his congregation warmed with him. The wild scene, too, did its part—the world of darkening moors spread out before them; the mountain wall behind them; the October wind sighing round the ruined walls; the lonely unaccustomed sounds of birds and water. When he ceased, boy after boy broke out into more or less incoherent praying. Soon in the dusk they could no longer see each other's faces; and then it was still easier to break through reserve.

At last David found himself speaking. What he said was at first almost inaudible, for he was kneeling between the wall and the pan which had been his childish joy, with his face and arms crushed against the stones. But when he began the boys about pricked up their ears, and David was conscious suddenly of a deepened silence. There were warm tears on his hidden cheeks; but it pleased him keenly they should listen so, and he prayed more audibly and freely. Then, when his voice dropped at last, the prayer-leader gave out the familiar hymn, 'Come, O thou Traveller unknown:'—

Come, O thou Traveller unknown,
  Whom still I hold, but cannot see!
My company before is gone,
  And I am left alone with Thee;
With Thee all night I mean to stay,
And wrestle till the break of day.

Wilt thou not yet to me reveal
  Thy new unutterable name?
Tell me, I still beseech thee, tell—
  To know it now resolved I am.
Wrestling, I will not let thee go,
Till I thy name, thy nature know.

* * * *

'Tis Love! 'tis Love—thou lovest me!
  I hear thy whisper in my heart;
The morning breaks, the shadows flee,
  Pure universal Love thou art;
To me, to all, thy mercies move,
Thy nature and thy name is Love.

Again and again the lines rose on the autumn air; each time the hymn came to an end it was started afresh, the sound of it spreading far and wide into the purple breast of Kinder Scout. At last the painful sobbing of poor Tom Mullins almost drowned

the singing. The prayer-leader, himself much moved, bent over and seized him by the arm.

'Look to Jesus, Tom. Lay hold on the Saviour. Don't think of your sins; they're done away i' th' blood o' the Lamb. Howd Him fast. Say, "I believe," and the Lord ull deliver yo.'

With a cry, the great hulking lad sprang to his feet, and clasped his arms above his head—

'I do believe—I will believe. Help me, Lord Jesus. Oh, I'm saved! I'm saved!' And he remained standing in an ecstasy, looking to the sky above the Scout, where the red sunset glow still lingered.

'Hallelujah! hallelujah! Thanks be to God!' cried the prayer-leader, and the smithy resounded in the growing darkness with similar shouts. David was almost choking with excitement. He would have given worlds to spring to Tom Mullins's side and proclaim the same faith. But the inmost heart of him, his real self, seemed to him at this testing moment something dead and cold. No heavenly voice spoke to *him*, David Grieve. A genuine pang of religious despair seized him. He looked out over the moor through a gap in the stones. There was a dim path below; the fancy struck him that Christ, the 'Traveller unknown,' was passing along it. He had already stretched out His hand of blessing to Tom Mullins.

'To me! to me, too!' David cried under his breath, carried away by the haunting imagination, and straining his eyes into the dusk. Had the night opened to his sight there and then in a vision of glory, he would have been no whit surprised.

Hark!—what was that sound?

A weird scream rose on the wind. The startled congregation in the smithy scrambled to their feet. Another scream, nearer apparently than the first, and then a loud wailing, broken every few seconds by a strange slight laugh, of which the distance seemed quite indefinite. Was it close by, or beyond the Red Brook?

The prayer-leader turned white, the boys stood huddled round him in every attitude of terror. Again the scream, and the little ghostly laugh! Looking at each other wildly, the whole congregation broke from the smithy down the hill. But the leader stopped himself.

'It's mebbe soom one in trouble,' he said manfully, every limb trembling. 'We mun go and see, my lads.' And he rushed off in the direction whence the first sound had seemed to come—towards the Red Brook—half a dozen of the bolder spirits following. The rest stood cowering on the slope under the smithy. David meanwhile had climbed the ruined wall, and stood with head strained forward, his eyes sweeping the moor. But every outline was sinking fast into the gulf of the night; only a few indistinct masses—a cluster of gorse-bushes, a clump of mountain ash—still showed here and there.

The leader made for one of these darker patches on the

mountain-side, led on always by the recurrent screams. He reached it ; it was a patch of juniper overhanging the Red Brook—when suddenly from behind it there shot up a white thing, taller than the tallest man, with nodding head and outspread arms, and such laughter—so faint, so shrill, so evil, breaking midway into a hoarse angry yell.

'*Jenny Crum! Jenny Crum!*' cried the whole band with one voice, and, wheeling round, they ran down the Scout, joined by the contingent from the smithy, some of them falling headlong among the heather in their agony of flight, others ruthlessly knocking over those in front of them who seemed to be in their way. In a few seconds, as it seemed, the whole Scout was left to itself and the night. Footsteps, voices, all were gone—save for one long peal of most human, but still elfish, mirth, which came from the Red Brook.

CHAPTER XI

A DARK figure sprang down from the wall of the smithy, leapt along the heather, and plunged into the bushes along the brook. A cry in another key was heard.

David emerged, dragging something behind him.

'Yo limb, yo! How dare yo, yo little beast? Yo impident little toad!' And in a perfect frenzy of rage he shook what he held. But Louie—for naturally it was Louie—wrenched herself away, and stood confronting him, panting, but exultant.

'I freetened 'em! just didn't I? Cantin humbugs! "*Jenny Crum! Jenny Crum!*"' And, mimicking the voice of the leader, she broke again into an hysterical shout of laughter.

David, beside himself, hit out and struck her. It was a heavy blow which knocked her down, and for a moment seemed to stun her. Then she recovered her senses, and flew at him in a mad passion, weeping wildly with the smart and excitement.

He held her off, ashamed of himself, till she flung away, shrieking out—

'Go and say its prayers, do—good little boy—poor little babby. Ugh, yo coward! hittin gells, that's all yo're good for.'

And she ran off so fast that all sight of her was lost in a few seconds. Only two or three loud sobs seemed to come back from the dark hollow below. As for the boy, he stopped a second to disentangle his feet from the mop and the tattered sheet wherewith Louie had worked her transformation scene. Then he dashed up the hill again, past the smithy, and into a track leading out on to the high road between Castleton and Clough End. He did not care where he went. Five minutes ago he had been almost in heaven; now he was in hell. He hated Louie, he hated the boys who had cut and run, he loathed himself. No!—religion was not for such as he. No more canting—no more praying—away with it! He seemed to shake all the emotion of the last

few weeks from him with scorn and haste, as he ran on, his strong young limbs battling with the wind.

Presently he emerged on the high road. To the left, a hundred yards away, were the lights of a wayside inn; a farm waggon and a pair of horses standing with drooped and patient heads were drawn up on the cobbles in front of it. David felt in his pockets. There was eighteenpence in them, the remains of half-a-crown a strange gentleman had given him in Clough End the week before for stopping a runaway horse. In he stalked.

'Two penn'orth of gin—hot!' he commanded.

The girl serving the bar brought it and stared at him curiously. The glaring paraffin lamp above his head threw the frowning brows and wild eyes, the crimson cheeks, heaving chest, and tumbled hair, into strong light and shade. 'That's a quare un!' she thought, but she found him handsome all the same, and, retreating behind the beer-taps, she eyed him surreptitiously. She was a raw country lass, not yet stript of all her natural shyness, or she would have begun to 'chaff' him.

'Another!' said David, pushing forward his glass. This time he looked at her. His reckless gaze travelled over her coarse and comely face, her full figure, her bare arms. He drank the glass she gave him, and yet another. She began to feel half afraid of him, and moved away. The hot stimulant ran through his veins. Suddenly he felt his head whirling from the effects of it, but that horrible clutch of despair was no longer on him. He raised himself defiantly and turned to go, staggering along the floor. He was near the entrance when an inner door opened, and the carter, who had been gossiping in a room behind with the landlord, emerged. He started with astonishment when he saw David.

'Hullo, Davy, what are yo after?'

David turned, nearly losing his balance as he did so, and clutching at the bar for support. He found himself confronted with Jim Wigson—his old enemy—who had been to Castleton with a load of hay and some calves, and was on his way back to Kinder again. When he saw who it was clinging to the bar counter, Jim first stared and then burst into a hoarse roar of laughter.

'Coom here! coom here!' he shouted to the party in the back parlour. 'Here's a rum start! I do declare this beats cockfighting!—this do. Damn my eyes iv it doosn't! Look at that yoong limb. Why they towd me down at Clough End this mornin he'd been took "serious"—took wi a prayin turn—they did. Look at un! It ull tak 'im till to-morrow mornin to know his yed from his heels. He! he! he! Yo're a deep un, Davy—yo are. But yo'll get a bastin when Hannah sees yo—prayin or no prayin.'

And Jim went off into another guffaw, pointing his whip the while at Davy. Some persons from the parlour crowded in, enjoying the fun. David did not see them. He reached out his

hand for the glass he had just emptied, and steadying himself by a mighty effort, flung it swift and straight in Jim Wigson's face. There was a crash of fragments, a line of blood appeared on the young carter's chin, and a chorus of wrath and alarm rose from the group behind him. With a furious oath Jim placed a hand on the bar, vaulted it, and fell upon the lad. David defended himself blindly, but he was dazed with drink, and his blows and kicks rained aimlessly on Wigson's iron frame. In a second or two Jim had tripped him up, and stood over him, his face ablaze with vengeance and conquest.

'Yo yoong varmint—yo cantin yoong hypocrite! I'll teach yo to show imperence to your betters. Yo bin allus badly i' want o' soombody to tak yo down a peg or two. Now I'll show yo. I'll not fight yo, but I'll flog yo—*flog yo*—d' yo hear?'

And raising his carter's whip he brought it down on the boy's back and legs. David tried desperately to rise—in vain—Jim had him by the collar; and four or five times more the heavy whip came down, avenging with each lash many a slumbering grudge in the victor's soul.

Then Jim felt his arm firmly caught. 'Now, Mister Wigson,' cried the landlord—a little man, but a wiry—'yo'll not get me into trooble. Let th' yoong ripstitch go. Yo've gien him a taste he'll not forget in a week o' Sundays. Let him go.'

Jim, with more oaths, struggled to get free, but the landlord had quelled many rows in his time, and his wrists were worthy of his calling. Meanwhile his wife helped up the boy. David was no sooner on his feet than he made another mad rush for Wigson, and it needed the combined efforts of landlord, landlady, and servant-girl to part the two again. Then the landlord, seizing David from behind by 'the scuft of the neck,' ran him out to the door in a twinkling.

'Go 'long wi yo! An if yo coom raisin th' divil here again, see iv I don't gie yo a souse on th' yed mysel.' And he shoved his charge out adroitly and locked the door.

David staggered across the road as though still under the impetus given by the landlord's shove.

The servant-girl took advantage of the loud cross-fire of talk which immediately rose at the bar round Jim Wigson to run to a corner window and lift the blind. The boy was sitting on a heap of stones for mending the road, looking at the inn. Other passers-by had come in, attracted by the row, and the girl slipped out unperceived, opened the side door, and ran across the road. It had begun to rain, and the drops splashed in her face.

David was sitting leaning forward, his eyes fixed on the lighted windows of the house opposite. The rays which came from them showed her that his nose and forehead were bleeding, and that the blood was dripping unheeded on the boy's clothes. He was utterly powerless, and trembling all over, but his look 'gave her a turn.'

'Now, luke here,' she said, bending down to him. 'Yo jes go

whoam. Wigson, he'll be out direckly, an he'll do yo a hurt iv he finds yo. Coom, I'll put yo i' the way for Kinder.'

And before he could gather his will to resist, she had dragged him up with her strong countrywoman's arms and was leading him along the road to the entrance of the lane he had come by.

'Lor, yo *are* bleedin,' she said compassionately ; 'he shud ha thowt as how yo wor nobbut a lad—an it wor he begun aggin fust. He's a big bully is Wigson.' And impulsively raising her apron she applied it to the blood, David quite passive all the while. The great clumsy lass nearly kissed him for pity.

'Now then,' she said at last, turning him into the lane, 'yo know your way, an I mun goo, or they'll be raisin the parish arter me. Gude neet to yo, an keep out o' Wigson's seet. Rest yursel a bit theer—agen th' wall.'

And leaving him leaning against the wall, she reluctantly departed, stopping to look back at him two or three times in spite of the rain, till the angle of the wall hid him from view.

The rain poured down and the wind whistled through the rough lane. David presently slipped down upon a rock jutting from the wall, and a fevered, intermittent sleep seized him—the result of the spirits he had been drinking. His will could oppose no resistance ; he slept on hour after hour, sheltered a little by an angle of the wall, but still soaked by rain and buffeted by the wind.

When he awoke he staggered suddenly to his feet. The smart of his back and legs recalled him, after a few moments of bewilderment, to a mental torture he had scarcely yet had time to feel. He—David Grieve—had been beaten—thrashed like a dog —by Jim Wigson! The remembered fact brought with it a degradation of mind and body—a complete unstringing of the moral fibres, which made even revenge seem an impossible output of energy. A nature of this sort, with such capacities and ambitions, carries about with it a sense of supremacy, a natural, indispensable self-conceit which acts as the sheath to the bud, and is the condition of healthy development. Break it down and you bruise and jeopardise the flower of life.

Jim Wigson!—the coarse, ignorant lout with whom he had been, more or less, at feud since his first day in Kinder, whom he had despised with all the strength of his young vanity. By to-morrow all Kinder would know, and all Kinder would laugh. 'What! yo whopped Reuben Grieve's nevvy, Jim? Wal, an a good thing, too! A lick now an again ud do *him* noa harm—a cantankerous yoong rascot—pert an proud, like t' passon's pig, I say.' David could hear the talk to be as though it were actually beside him. It burnt into his ear.

He groped his way through the lane and on to the moor—trembling with physical exhaustion, the morbid frenzy within him choking his breath, the storm beating in his face. What was that black mass to his right?—the smithy? A hard sob rose in his

throat. Oh, he had been so near to an ideal world of sweetness, purity, holiness! Was it a year ago?

With great difficulty he found the crossing-place in the brook, and then the gap in the wall which led him into the farm fields. When he was still a couple of fields off the house he heard the dogs beginning. But he heard them as though in a dream.

At last he stood at the door and fumbled for the handle. Locked! Why, what time could it be? He tried to remember what time he had left home, but failed. At last he knocked, and just as he did so he perceived through a chink of the kitchen shutter a light on the scrubbed deal table inside, and Hannah's figure beside it. At the sound of the knocker Hannah rose, put away her work with deliberation, snuffed the candle, and then moved with it to the door of the kitchen. The boy watched her with a quickly beating heart and whirling brain. She opened the door.

'Whar yo bin?' she demanded sternly. 'I'd like to know what business yo have to coom in this time o' neet, an your uncle fro whoam. Yo've bin in mischief, I'll be bound. Theer's Louie coom back wi a black eye, an jes because she woan't say nowt about it, I know as it's yo are at t' bottom o' 't. I'm reg'lar sick o' sich doins in a decent house. Whar yo bin, I say?'

And this time she held the candle up so as to see him. She had been sitting fuming by herself, and was in one of her blackest tempers. David's misdemeanour was like food to a hungry instinct.

'I went to prayer-meetin,' the lad said thickly. It seemed to him as though the words came all in the wrong order.

Hannah bent forward and gave a sudden cry.

'Why, yo bin fightin! Yo're all ower blood! Yo bin fightin, and I'll bet a thousand pund yo draw'd in Louie too. And *sperrits*! Why, yo *smell* o' sperrits! Yo're jes *reekin* wi 'em! Wal, upon my word!'—and Hannah drew herself back, flinging every slow word in his face like a blow. 'Yo feature your mither, yo do, boath on you, pretty close. I allus said it ud coom out i' yo too. Prayer-meetin! Yo yoong hypocrite! Gang your ways! Yo may sleep i' th' stable; it's good enough liggin for yo this neet.'

And before he had taken in her words she had slammed the door in his face, and locked it. He made a feeble rush for it in vain. Hannah marched back into the kitchen, listening instinctively first to him left outside, and then for any sound there might be from upstairs. In a minute or two she heard uneven steps going away; but there was no movement in the room overhead. Louie was sleeping heavily. As for Hannah, she sat down again with a fierce decision of gesture, which seemed to vibrate through the kitchen and all it held. Who could find fault with her? It would be a lesson to him. It was not a cold night, and there was straw in the stable—a deal better lying than such a boy deserved. As she thought of his 'religious' turn she shrugged her shoulders with a bitter scorn.

The night wore on in the high Kinder valley. The stormy wind and rain beat in great waves of sound and flood against the breast of the mountain; the Kinder stream and the Red Brook danced under the heavy drops. The grouse lay close and silent in the sheltering heather; even the owls in the lower woods made no sound. Still, the night was not perfectly dark, for towards midnight a watery moon rose, and showed itself at intervals between the pelting showers.

In the Dawsons' little cottage on Frimley Moor there were still lights showing when that pale moon appeared. Margaret was watching late. She and another woman sat by the fire talking under their breaths. A kettle was beside her with a long spout, which sent the steam far into the room, keeping the air of it moist and warm for the poor bronchitic old man who lay close-curtained from the draughts on the wooden bed in the corner.

The kettle sang, the fire crackled, and the wind shook the windows and doors. But suddenly, through the other sounds, Margaret was aware of an intermittent knocking—a low, hesitating sound, as of some one outside afraid, and yet eager, to make himself heard.

She started up, and her companion—a homely neighbour, one of those persons whose goodness had, perhaps, helped to shape poor Margaret's philosophy of life—looked round with a scared expression.

'Whoiver can it be, this time o' neet?' said Margaret—and she looked at the old clock—'why, it's close on middle-neet!'

She hesitated a moment, then she went to the door, and bent her mouth to the chink—

'Who are yo? What d' yo want?' she asked, in a distinct but low voice, so as not to disturb 'Lias.

No answer for a minute. Then her ear caught some words from outside. With an exclamation she unlocked the door and threw it open.

'Davy! Davy!' she cried, almost forgetting her patient.

The boy clung to the lintel without a word.

'Coom your ways in!' she said peremptorily, catching him by the sleeve. 'We conno ha no draughts on th' owd man.'

And she drew him into the light, and shut the door. Then as the shaded candle and firelight fell on the tall lad, wavering now to this side, now to that, as though unable to support himself, his clothes dripping on the flags, his face deadly white, save for the smears of blood upon it, the two women fell back in terror.

'Will yo gie me shelter?' said the boy, hoarsely; 'I bin lying hours i' th' wet. Aunt Hannah turned me out.'

Margaret came close to him and looked him all over.

'What for did she turn yo out, Davy?'

'I wor late. I'd been fightin Jim Wigson, an she smelt me o' drink.'

And suddenly the lad sank down on a stool near, and laid his head in his hands, as though he could hold it up no longer.

Margaret's blanched old face melted all in a minute.

'Howd 'un up quick!' she said to her companion, still in a whisper. 'He hanno got a dry thread on—and luke at that cut on his yed—why, he'll be laid up for weeks, maybe, for this. Get his cloos off, an we'll put him on my bed then.'

And between them they dragged him up, and Margaret began to strip off his jacket. As they held him—David surrendering himself passively—the curtain of the bed was drawn back, and 'Lias, raising himself on an elbow, looked out into the room. As he caught sight of the group of the boy and the two women, arrested in their task by the movement of the curtain, the old man's face expressed, first a weak and agitated bewilderment, and then in an instant it cleared.

His dream wove the sight into itself, and 'Lias knew all about it. His thin long features, with the white hair hanging about them, took an indulgent amused look.

'*Bony*—eh, Bony, is that *yo*, man? Eh, but yo're cold an pinched, loike! A gude glass o' English grog ud not come amiss to yo. An your coat, an your boots—what is 't drippin? *Snaw?* Yo make a man's backbane freeze t' see yo. An there's hot wark behind yo, too. Moscow might ha warmed yo, I'm thinkin, an—'

But the weak husky voice gave way, and 'Lias fell back, still holding the curtain, though, in his emaciated hand, and straining his dim eyes on David. Margaret, with tears, ran to him, tried to quiet him and to shut out the light from him again. But he pushed her irritably aside.

'No, Margaret,—doan't intrude. What d' yo know about it? Yo know nowt, Margaret. When did yo iver heer o' the Moscow campaign? Let me be, woan't yo?'

But perceiving that he would not be quieted, she turned him on his pillows, so that he could see the boy at his ease.

'He's bin out i' th' wet, 'Lias dear, has Davy,' she said; 'and it's nobbut a clashy night. We mun gie him summat hot, and a place to sleep in.'

But the old man did not listen to her. He lay looking at David, his pale blue eyes weirdly visible in his haggard face, muttering to himself. He was still tramping in the snow with the French army.

Then, suddenly, for the first time, he seemed troubled. He stared up at the pale miserable boy who stood looking at him with trembling lips. His own face began to work painfully, his dream struggled with recognition.

Margaret drew David quickly away. She hurried him into the further corner of the cottage, where he was out of sight of the bed. There she quickly stripped him of his wet garments, as any mother might have done, found an old flannel shirt of 'Lias's for him, and, wrapping him close in a blanket, she made him lie down on her own bed, he being now much too weak to realise what was done with him. Then she got an empty bottle, filled it

from the kettle, and put it to his feet; and finally she brought a bowlful of warm water and a bit of towel, and, sitting down by him, she washed the blood and dirt away from his face and hand, and smoothed down the tangled black hair. She, too, noticed the smell of spirits, and shook her head over it; but her motherliness grew with every act of service, and when she had made him warm and comfortable, and he was dropping into the dead sleep of exhaustion, she drew her old hand tenderly across his brow.

'He do feature yan o' my own lads so as he lies theer,' she said tremulously to her friend at the fire, as though explaining herself. 'When they'd coom home late fro wark, I'd use to hull 'em up so mony a time. Ay, I'd been woonderin what had coom to th' boy. I thowt he'd been goin wrang soomhow, or he'd ha coom aw these weeks to see 'Lias an me. It's a poor sort o' family he's got. That Hannah Grieve's a hard un, I'll uphowd yo. Theer's a deal o' her fault in 't, yo may mak sure.'

Then she went to give 'Lias some brandy—he lived on little else now. He dropped asleep again, and, coming back to the hearth, she consented to lie down before it while her friend watched. Her failing frame was worn out with nursing and want of rest, and she was soon asleep.

When Davy awoke the room was full of a chill daylight. As he moved he felt himself stiff all over. The sensation brought back memory, and the boy's whole being seemed to shrink together. He burrowed first under his coverings out of the light, then suddenly he sat up in bed, in the shadow of the little staircase—or rather ladder—which led to the upper story, and looked about him.

The good woman who had shared Margaret's watch was gone back to her own home and children. Margaret had made up the fire, tidied the room, and, at 'Lias's request, drawn up the blinds. She had just given him some beef-tea and brandy, sponged his face, and lifted him on his pillows. There seemed to be a revival of life in the old man, death was for the moment driven back; and Margaret hung over him in an ecstasy, the two crooning together. David could see her thin bent figure—the sharpened delicacy of the emaciated face set in the rusty black net cap which was tied under the chin, and fell in soft frills on the still brown and silky hair. He saw her weaver's hand folded round 'Lias's, and he could hear 'Lias speaking in a weak thread of a voice, but still sanely and rationally. It gave him a start to catch some of the words—he had been so long accustomed to the visionary 'Lias.

'Have yo rested, Margaret?'

'Ay, dear love, three hours an moor. Betsy James wor here; she saw yo wanted for nowt. She's a gude creetur, ain't she, 'Lias?'

'Ay, but noan so good as my Margaret,' said the old man, looking at her wistfully. 'But yo'll wear yorsel down, Margaret;

'yo've had no rest for neets. Yo're allus toilin' and moilin', an I'm no worth it, Margaret.'

The tears gushed to the wife's eyes. It was only with the nearness of death that 'Lias seemed to have found out his debt to her. To both, her lifelong service had been the natural offering of the lower to the higher ; she had not been used to gratitude, and she could not bear it.

'Dear heart! dear love!' David heard her say ; and then there came to his half-reluctant ear caresses such as a mother gives her child. He laid his head on his knees, trying to shut them out. He wished with a passionate and bitter regret that he had not been so many weeks without coming near these two people ; and now 'Lias was going fast, and after to-day he would see them both no more—for ever?

Margaret heard him moving, and nodded back to him over her shoulder.

'Yo've slept well, Davy,—better nor I thowt yo would. Your cloos are by yo—atwixt yo an t' stairs.'

And there he found them, dry and brushed. He dressed hastily and came forward to the fire. 'Lias recognised him feebly, Margaret watching anxiously to see whether his fancies would take him again. In this tension of death and parting his visions had become almost more than she could bear. But 'Lias lay quiet.

'Davy wor caught i' th' rain, and I gave him a bed,' she explained again, and the old man nodded without a word.

Then as she prepared him a bowl of oatmeal she stood by the fire giving the boy motherly advice. He must go back home, of course, and never mind Hannah ; there would come a time when he would get his chance like other people ; and he mustn't drink, for, 'i' th' first place, drink wor a sad waste o' good wits,' and David's were 'better'n most ;' and in the second, 'it wor a sin agen the Lord.'

David sat with his head drooped in his hand apparently listening. In reality, her gentle babble passed over him almost unheeded. He was aching in mind and body ; his strong youth, indeed, had but just saved him from complete physical collapse ; for he had lain an indefinite time on the soaking moor, till misery and despair had driven him to Margaret's door. But his moral equilibrium was beginning to return, in virtue of a certain resolution, the one thing which now stood between him and the black gulf of the night. He ate his porridge and then he got up.

'I mun goo, Margaret.'

He would fain have thanked her, but the words choked in his throat.

'Ay, soa yo mun, Davy,' said the little body briskly. 'If theer's an onpleasant thing to do it's best doon quickly—yo mun go back and do your duty. Coom and see us when yo're passin again. An say good-bye to 'Lias. He's that wick this mornin—ain't yo, 'Lias?'

And with a tender cheerfulness she ran across to 'Lias and told him Davy was going.

'Good-bye, Davy, my lad, good-bye,' murmured the old man, as he felt the boy's strong fingers touching his. 'Have yo been readin owt, Davy, since we saw yo? It's a long time, Davy.'

'No, nowt of ony account,' said David, looking away.

'Ay, but yo mun keep it up. Coom when yo like; I've not mony books, but yo know yo can have 'em aw. I want noan o' them now, do I, Marg'ret? But I want for nowt—nowt. Dyin 's long, but it's varra—varra peaceful. Margaret!'

And withdrawing his hand from Davy, 'Lias laid it in his wife's with a long, long sigh. David left them so. He stole out unperceived by either of them.

When he got outside he stood for a moment under the sheltering sycamores and laid his cheek against the door. The action contained all he could not say.

Then he sped along towards the farm. The sun was rising through the autumn mists, striking on the gold of the chestnuts, the red of the cherry trees. There were spaces of intense blue among the rolling clouds, and between the storm past and the storm to come the whole moorland world was lavishly, garishly bright.

He paused at the top of the pasture-fields to look at the farm. Smoke was already rising from the chimney. Then Aunt Hannah was up, and he must mind himself. He crept on under walls, till he got to the back of the farmyard. Then he slipped in, ran into the stable, and got an old coat of his left there the day before. There was a copy of a Methodist paper lying near it. He took it up and tore it across with passion. But his rage was not so much with the paper. It was his own worthless, unstable, miserable self he would have rent if he could. The wreck of ideal hopes, the defacement of that fair image of itself which every healthy youth bears about with it, could not have been more pitifully expressed.

Then he looked round to see if there was anything else that he could honestly take. Yes—an ash stick he had cut himself a week or two ago. Nothing else—and there was Tibby moving and beginning to bark in the cowhouse.

He ran across the road, and from a safe shelter in the fields on the farther side he again looked back to the farm. There was Louie's room, the blind still down. He thought of his blow of the night before—of his promises to her. Aye, she would fret over his going—he knew that—in her own wild way. She would think he had been a beast to her. So he had—so he had! There surged up in his mind inarticulate phrases of remorse, of self-excuse, as though he were talking to her.

Some day he would come back and claim her. But when? His buoyant self-dependence was all gone. It had nothing to do with his present departure. That came simply from the fact that

it was *impossible* for him to go on living in Kinder any longer—he did not stop to analyse the whys and wherefores.

But suddenly a nervous horror of seeing anyone he knew, now that the morning was advancing, startled him from his hiding-place. He ran up towards the Scout again, so as to make a long circuit round the Wigsons' farm. As he distinguished the walls of it a shiver of passion ran through the young body. Then he struck off straight across the moors towards Glossop.

One moment he stood on the top of Mardale Moor. On one side of him was the Kinder valley, Needham Farm still showing among its trees ; the white cataract of the Downfall cleaving the dark wall of the Scout, and calling to the runaway in that voice of storm he knew so well ; the Mermaid's Pool gleaming like an eye in the moorland. On the other side were hollow after hollow, town beyond town, each with its cap of morning smoke. There was New Mills, there was Stockport, there in the far distance was Manchester.

The boy stood a moment poised between the two worlds, his ash-stick in his hand, the old coat wound round his arm. Then at a bound he cleared a low stone wall beside him and ran down the Glossop road.

Twelve hours later Reuben Grieve climbed the long hill to the farm. His wrinkled face was happier than it had been for months, and his thoughts were so pleasantly occupied that he entirely failed to perceive, for instance, the behaviour of an acquaintance, who stopped and started as he met him at the entrance of the Kinder lane, made as though he would have spoken, and, thinking better of it, walked on. Reuben—the mendacious Reuben—had done very well with his summer stock—very well indeed. And part of his earnings was now safely housed in the hands of an old chapel friend, to whom he had confided them under pledge of secrecy. But he took a curious, excited pleasure in the thought of the 'poor mouth' he was going to make to Hannah. He was growing reckless in his passion for restitution—always provided, however, that he was not called upon to brave his wife openly. A few more such irregular savings, and, if an opening turned up for David, he could pay the money and pack off the lad before Hannah could look round. He could never do it under her opposition, but he thought he could do it and take the consequences—he *thought* he could.

He opened his own gate. There on the house doorstep stood Hannah, whiter and grimmer than ever.

'Reuben Grieve,' she said quickly, 'your nevvy's run away. An if yo doan't coom and keep your good-for-nothin niece in her place, and make udder foak keep a civil tongue i' their head to your wife, I'll leave your house this neet, as sure as I wor born a Martin!'

Reuben stumbled into the house. There was a wild rush

downstairs, and Louie fell upon him, David's blow showing ghastly plain in her white quivering face.

'Whar's Davy?' she said. 'Yo've got him!—he's hid soomwhere—yo know whar he is! I'll not stay here if yo conno find him! It wor *her* fault'—and she threw out a shaking hand towards her aunt—'she druv him out last neet—an Dawsons took him in—an iverybody's cryin shame on her! And if yo doan't mak her find him—she knows where he is—I'll not stay in this hole!—I'll kill her!—I'll burn th' house!—I'll—'

The child stopped—panting, choked—beside herself.

Hannah made a threatening step, but at her gesture Reuben sprang up, and seizing her by both wrists he looked at her from a height, as a judge looks. Never had those dull eyès met her so before.

'Woman!' he cried fiercely. 'Woman! what ha yo doon wi Sandy's son?'

BOOK II

YOUTH

CHAPTER I

A TALL youth carrying a parcel of books under his arm was hurrying along Market Place, Manchester. Beside him were covered flower stalls bordering the pavement, in front of him the domed mass of the Manchester Exchange, and on all sides he had to push his way through a crowd of talking, chaffering, hurrying humanity. Presently he stopped at the door of a restaurant bearing the idyllic and altogether remarkable name—there it was in gilt letters over the door—of the 'Fruit and Flowers Parlour.' On the side post of the door a bill of fare was posted, which the young man looked up and down with careful eyes. It contained a strange medley of items in all tongues—

Marrow pie
Haricots à la Lune de Miel
Vol-au-Vent à la bonne Santé
Tomato fritters
Cheese 'Ticements
Salad saladorum

And at the bottom of the *menu* was printed in bold red characters, 'No meat, no disease. *Ergo*, no meat, no sin. Fellow-citizens, leave your carnal foods, and try a more excellent way. I.E Push the door and walk in. The Fruit and Flowers Parlour invites everybody and overcharges nobody.'

The youth did not trouble, however, to read the notice. He knew it and the 'Parlour' behind it by heart. But he moved away, pondering the *menu* with a smile.

In his amused abstraction—at the root of which lay the appetite of eighteen—he suddenly ran into a passer-by, who stumbled against a shop window with an exclamation of pain. The youth's attention was attracted and he stopped awkwardly.

'People of your height, young man, should look before them,' said the victim, rubbing what seemed to be a deformed leg, while his lips paled a little.

'Mr. Ancrum,' cried the other, amazed.

'Davy!'

The two looked at each other. Then Mr. Ancrum gripped the lad's arm.

'Help me along, Davy. It's only a bruise. It'll go off. Where are you going?'

'Up Piccadilly way with a parcel,' said Davy, looking askance

at his companion's nether man. 'Did I knock your bad leg, sir?'

'Oh no, nothing—never mind. Well now, Davy, this is queer—decidedly queer. Four years!—and we run against each other in Market Street at last. Tell me the truth, Davy—have you long ago given me up as a man who could make promises to a lad in difficulties and forget 'em as soon as he was out of sight? Say it out, my boy.'

David flushed and looked down at his companion with some embarrassment. Their old relation of minister and pupil had left a deep mark behind it. Moreover, in the presence of that face of Mr. Ancrum's, a long, thin, slightly twisted face, with the stamp somehow of a tragic sincerity on the eyes and mouth, it was difficult to think as slightingly of his old friend as he had done for a good while past, apparently with excellent reason.

'I supposed there was something the matter,' he blurted out at last.

'Well, never mind, Davy,' said the other, smiling sadly. 'We can't talk here in this din. But now I've got you, I keep you. Where are you?'

'I'm in Half Street, sir—Purcell's, the bookseller.'

'Don't know him. I never go into a shop. I have no money. Are you apprentice there?'

'Well, there was no binding. I'm assistant. I do a lot of business one way and another, buying and selling both.'

'How long have you been in Manchester?'

'Four years, sir.'

The minister looked amazed.

'And I have been here, off and on, for the last three. How have we missed each other all that time? I made inquiries at Clough End, when—ah, well, no matter; but it was too late. You had decamped, no one could tell me anything.'

David walked on beside his companion, silent and awkward. The explanation seemed a lame one. Mr. Ancrum had left Clough End in May, promising to look out for a place for the lad at once, and to let him know. Six whole months elapsed between that promise and David's own departure. Yes, it was lame; but it was so long ago, and so many things had happened since, that it did not signify. Only he did not somehow feel much effusion in meeting his old friend and playfellow again.

'Getting on, Davy?' said Ancrum presently, looking the lad up and down.

David made a movement of the shoulders which the minister noticed. It was both more free and more graceful than ordinary English gesture. It reawakened in Ancrum at once that impression of something alien and unusual which both David and his sister had often produced in him while they were still children.

'I don't know,' said the boy slowly; and then, after a hesitation or two, fell silent.

'Well, look here,' said Ancrum, stopping short; 'this won't do for talk, as I said before; but I must know all about you, and I must tell you what I can about myself. I lodge in Mortimer Road, you know, up Fallowfield way. You can get there by tram in twenty minutes; when will you come and see me? To-night?'

The lad thought a moment.

'Would Wednesday night do, sir? I—I believe I'm going to the music to-night.'

'What, to the "Elijah," in the Free Trade Hall? Appoint me a place to meet—we'll go together—and you shall come home to supper with me afterwards.'

David flushed and looked straight before him.

'I promised to take two young ladies,' he said, after a moment, abruptly.

'Oh!' said Mr. Ancrum, laughing. 'I apologise. Well, Wednesday night, then.—Don't you forget, Davy—half-past seven? Done. *Fourteen*, Mortimer Road. Good-bye.'

And the minister turned and retraced his steps towards Market Place. He walked slowly, like one much preoccupied, and might have run into fresh risks but for the instinctive perception of most passers-by that he was not a person to be hustled. Suddenly he laughed out—thinking of David and his 'young ladies,' and comparing the lad's admission with his former attitude towards 'gells.' Well, time had but wrought its natural work. What a brilliant noticeable creature altogether—how unlike the ordinary run of north-country lads! But that he had been from the beginning—the strain of some nimbler blood had always shown itself.

Meanwhile, David made his way up Piccadilly—did some humourist divert himself, in days gone by, with dropping a shower of London names on Manchester streets?—and deposited his parcel. Then the great clock of the Exchange struck twelve, and the Cathedral followed close upon it, the sounds swaying and vibrating above the crowds hurrying through Market Street. It was a damp October day. Above, the sky was hidden by a dark canopy of cloud and smoke; the Cathedral on its hill rose iron-black above the black streets and river; black mud encrusted all the streets, and bespattered those that walked in them. Nothing more dreary than the smoke-grimed buildings on either hand, than the hideous railway station across the bridge, or the mud-sprinkled hoardings covered with flaring advertisements, which led up to the bridge, could be well imagined. Manchester was at its darkest and grimmest.

But as David Grieve walked back along Market Street his heart danced within him. Neither mud nor darkness, neither the squalor of the streets, nor the penetrating damp of the air, affected him at all. The crowd, the rush of life about him, the gas in the shops, the wares on which it shone, the endless faces passing him, the sense of hurry, of business, of quick living—

he saw and felt nothing else; and to these his youth was all atune.

Arrived in Market Place again he made his way with alacrity to the 'Parlour.' For it was dinner time; he had a free half-hour, and nine times out of ten he spent it at the 'Parlour.'

He walked in, put his hat on its accustomed peg, took his seat at a table near the door, and looked round for some one. The low widespreading room was well filled, mostly with clerks and shopmen; the gas was lit because of the darkness outside, and showed off the gay panels on the walls filled with fruit and flower subjects, for which Adrian O'Connor Lomax, commonly called 'Daddy,' the owner of the restaurant, had given a commission to some students at the Mechanics' Institute, and whereof he was inordinately proud. At the end of the room near the counter was a table occupied by about half a dozen young men, all laughing and talking noisily, and beside them—shouting, gesticulating, making dashes, now for one, now for another—was a figure, which David at once set himself to watch, his chin balanced on his hand, his eyes dancing. It was the thin tall figure of an oldish man in a long frock-coat, which opened in front over a gaily flowered silk waistcoat. On the bald crown of his head he wore a black skull-cap, below which certain grotesque and scanty tails of fair hair, carefully brushed, fell to his shoulders. His face was long and sharply pointed, and the surface of it bronzed and wrinkled by long exposure, out of all likeness to human skin. The eyes were weirdly prominent and blue; the gestures had the deliberate extravagance of an actor; and the whole man recalled a wizard of pantomime.

David had hardly time to amuse himself with the 'chaffing' of Daddy, which was going on, and which went on habitually at the Parlour from morning till night, when Daddy perceived a new-comer.

He turned round sharp upon his heels, surveyed the room with the frown of a general.

'Ah!' he said with a theatrical air, as he made out the lad at the further table. 'Gentlemen, I let you off for the present,' and waving his hand to them with an indulgent self-importance, which provoked a roar of laughter, he turned and walked down the restaurant, with a quick swaying gait, to where David sat.

David made room for him in a smiling silence. Lomax sat down, and the two looked at each other.

'Davy,' said Daddy severely, 'why weren't you here yesterday?'

'When did you begin opening on Sundays, Daddy?' said the youth, attacking a portion of marrow pie, which had just been laid before him, his gay curious eyes still wandering over Daddy's costume, which was to-day completed by a large dahlia in the buttonhole, as grotesque as the rest.

'Ah bedad, but I'm losing my memory entirely;—and you

know it, you varmint. Well then, it was Saturday you weren't here.'

'You're about right there. I was let off early, and got a walk out Ramsbottom way with a fellow. I hadn't stretched my legs for two months, and—I'll confess to you, Daddy—that when we got down from the moor, I was—overtaken—as the pious people say—by a mutton chop.'

The lad looked up at him laughing. Daddy surveyed him with chagrin.

'I knew you were a worthless lukewarm sort of a creature. Flesh-eating 's as bad as drink for them that have got it in 'em. It'll come out. Well, go your ways! *You'll* never be Prime Minister.'

'Don't distress yourself, Daddy. As long as marrow pies are good, I shall eat 'em—you may count on that. What's that cheese affair down there?' and he pointed towards the last item but one in the bill of fare. Instead of answering, the old man turned on his seat, and called to one of the waitresses near. In a second David had a 'Cheese 'Ticement' before him, at which he peered curiously. Daddy watched him, not without some signs of nervousness.

'Daddy,' said David, calmly looking up, 'when I last saw this article it was called "Welsh rabbit."'

'Davy, you've no soul for fine distinctions,' said the other hastily. 'Change the subject. How have my *dear* brother-in-law and you been hitting it off lately?'

David went on with his ''Ticement,' the corners of his mouth twitching, for a minute or so, then he raised his head and slowly shook it, looking Daddy in the face.

'We shall bear up when we say good-bye, Daddy, and I don't think that crisis is far off. It would have come long ago, only I do happen to know a provoking deal more about books than any assistant he ever had before. Last week I picked him up a copy of "Bells and Pomegranates" for one and nine, and he sold it next day for two pound sixteen. There's business for you, Daddy. That put off our breach at least a fortnight, but unless I discover a first folio of Shakespeare for sixpence between now and then, I don't see what's to postpone the agony after that—and if I did I should probably speculate in it myself. No, Daddy, it's coming to the point, as the tiger said when he reached the last joint of the cow's tail. And it's your fault.'

'My fault, Davy,' said Lomax, half tremulous, half delighted, drawing a chair close up to the table that he might lose nothing of the youth's confidences. 'What d'ye mean by that, ye spalpeen?'

'Well, wasn't it you took me to the Hall of Science, Daddy, and couldn't keep a quiet tongue in your head about it afterwards? Wasn't it you lent me the "Secularist," which got me into the worst rumpus of the season? Oh, Daddy, you're a bad un!'

And the handsome lad leant back in his chair, stretching his long legs and studying Daddy with twinkling eyes. As for Lomax, he received the onslaught with a curious mixture of expressions, in which a certain malicious pleasure, crossed by an uneasy sense of responsibility, was the most prominent. He sat drumming on the table, his straggling beard falling forward on to his chest, his mouth pursing itself up. At last he threw back his head with energy.

'I'll not excuse myself, Davy; you're well out of it. You'll be a great man yet—always provided you can manage yourself in the matter of flesh meat. It was to come one way or the other—you couldn't put up much longer with such a puke-stocking as my precious brother-in-law. (That's one of the great points of Shakespeare, Davy, my lad—perhaps you haven't noticed it—you get such a ruck of bad names out of him for the asking! Puke-stocking is good—real good. If it wasn't made for a sanctimonious hypocrite of a Baptist like Purcell it ought to have been.) And "Spanish-pouch" too! Oh, I love "Spanish-pouch"! When I've called a man "Spanish-pouch," I'm the better for it, Davy—the bile's relieved.'

'Thank you, Daddy; I'll remember the receipt. I say, were you ever in Purcell's shop?'

'Purcell's shop? Why, of course I was, you varmint! Wasn't it there I met my Isabella, his sister? Ah, the poor thing! He led her a life; and when I was his assistant I took sides with her—that was the beginning of it all. At first we hadn't got on so badly—I had a pious fit on myself in those days—but one day at tea, I had been making free—taking Isabella's part. There had been a neighbour there, and the laugh had been against him. Well, after tea, we marched back to the shop, and says he to me, as black as thunder, "I'm quite willing, Lomax, to be your Christian brother in here: when we're in society I'd have you remember it's different. You should know your place." "Oh, should I?" says I. (Isabella had been squeezing my hand under the table and I didn't care what I said.) "Well, you'd better find some one as will, and be d——d to your Christian brotherhood." And I took my cap up and marched out, leaving him struck a pillar of salt with surprise, and that mad!—for we were in the middle of issuing the New Year's catalogue, and he'd left most of it to me. And three weeks after—'

Daddy rose quivering with excitement, put his thumbs into his waistcoat pocket, and bent over the back of his chair towards David. As he stood there, on tip-toe, the flaps of the long coat falling back from him like wings, his skull-cap slightly awry, two red spots on either wrinkled cheek, and every feature of the sharp brown face alive with the joy of his long-past vengeance, he was like some strange perching bird.

'—Three weeks after, Davy, I married my Isabella under his puritanical nose, at the chapel across the way; and the bit of spite in it—bedad!—it was like mustard to beef. (Pish! what am

I about !) And I set up shop almost next door to the chapel, and took the trade out of his mouth, and enjoyed myself finely for six months. At the end of that time he gave out that the neighbourhood was too "low" for him, and he moved up town. And though I've been half over the world since, I've never ceased to keep an eye on him. I've had a finger in more pies of his than he thinks for !'

And Daddy drew himself up, pressing his hands against his sides, his long frame swelling out, as it seemed, with sudden passion. David watched him with a look half sympathetic, half satirical.

'I don't see that he did you much harm, Daddy.'

'Harm !' said the little man, irascibly. 'Harm ! I must say you're uncommon slow at gripping a situation, Davy. I'd my wife's score to settle, too, I tell you, as well as my own. He'd sat on his poor easy-going sister till she hadn't a feature left. I knew he had. He's made up of all the mean vices—and at the same time, if you were to hear him at a prayer meeting, you'd think that since Enoch went up to heaven the wrong way, the world didn't happen to have been blessed with another saint to match Tom Purcell.' And, stirred by his own eloquence, Daddy looked down frowning on the youth before him.

'What made you give up the book-trade, Daddy ?' asked David, with a smile.

It was like the pricking of a bladder. Daddy collapsed in a moment. Sitting down again, he began to arrange his coat elaborately over his knees, as though to gain time.

'David, you're an inquisitive varmint,' he said at last, looking up askance at his companion. 'Some one's been telling you tales, by the look of you. Look here—if Tom Purcell's a blathering hypocrite, that is not the same thing precisely as saying that Adrian O'Connor Lomax is a perfect specimen of the domestic virtues. Never you mind, my boy, what made me give up book-selling. I've chucked so many things overboard since, that its hardly worth inquiring. Try any trade you like and Daddy 'll be able to give you some advice in it—that's the only thing that concerns you. Well now, tell me—' and he turned round and put his elbows on the table, leaning over to David—'When are you coming away, and what are your prospects ?'

'I told you about a fortnight would see it out, Daddy. And there's a little shop in— But it's no good, Daddy. You can't keep secrets.'

The old man turned purple, drew himself up, and looked fiercely at David from behind his spectacles. But in a second his mood changed and he stretched his hand slowly out across the table.

'On the honour of a Lomax,' he said solemnly.

There was a real dignity about the absurd action which melted David. He shook the hand and repented him. Leaning over he whispered some information in Daddy's ear. Daddy beamed.

And in the midst of the superfluity of nods and winks that followed David called for his bill.

The action recalled Daddy to his own affairs, and he looked on complacently while David paid.

''Pon my word, Davy, I can hardly yet believe in my own genius. Where else, my boy, in this cotton-spinning hole, would you find a dinner like that for sixpence? Am I a benefactor to the species, sir, or am I not?"

'Looks like it, Daddy, by the help of Miss Dora.'

'Aye, aye,' said the old man testily,—'I'll not deny that Dora's useful to the business. But the *inspiration*, Davy, 's all mine. You want genius, my boy, to make a tomfool of yourself like this,' and he looked himself proudly up and down. 'Twenty customers a week come here for nothing in the world but to see what new rigs Daddy may be up to. The invention—the happy ideas, man, I throw into one day of this place would stock twenty ordinary businesses.'

'All the same, Daddy, I've tasted Welsh rabbit before,' said David drily, putting on his hat.

'I scorn your remark, sir. It argues a poorly furnished mind. Show me anything new in this used-up world, eh? but for the name and the dishing up—Well, good-bye, Davy, and good luck to you!'

David made his way across Hanging Ditch to a little row of houses bearing the baldly appropriate name of Half Street. It ran along the eastern side of the Cathedral close. First came the houses, small, irregular, with old beams and projections here and there, then a paved footway, then the railings round the close. In full view of the windows of the street rose the sixteenth-century church which plays as best it can the part of Cathedral to Manchester. Round it stretched a black and desolate space paved with tombstones. Not a blade of grass broke the melancholy of those begrimed and time-worn slabs. The rain lay among them in pools, squalid buildings overlooked them, and the church, with its manifest inadequacy to a fine site and a great city, did but little towards overcoming the mean and harsh impression made—on such a day especially—by its surroundings.

David opened the door of a shop about halfway up the row. A bell rang sharply, and as he shut the outer door behind him, another at the back of the shop opened hastily, and a young girl came in.

'Mr. Grieve, father's gone out to Eccles to see some books a gentleman wants him to buy. If Mr. Stephens comes, you're to tell him father's found him two or three more out of the list he sent. You know where all his books are put together, if he wants to see them, father says.'

'Yes, thank you, Miss Purcell, I do. No other message?'

'No.' The speaker lingered. 'What time do we start for the music to-night? But you'll be down to tea?'

'Certainly, if you and Miss Dora don't want it to yourselves.' The speaker smiled. He was leaning on the counter, while the girl stood behind it.

'Oh dear, no!' said Miss Purcell with a half-pettish gesture. 'I don't know what to talk to Dora about now. She thinks of nothing but St. Damian's and her work. It's worse than father. And, of course, I know she hasn't much opinion of *me*. Indeed, she's always telling me so—well, not exactly—but she lets me guess fast enough.'

The speaker put up two small hands to straighten some of the elaborate curls and twists with which her pretty head was crowned. There was a little consciousness in the action. The thought of her cousin had evidently brought with it the thought of some of those things of which the stern Dora disapproved.

David looked at the brown hair and the slim fingers as he was meant to look at them. Yet in his smiling good humour there was not a trace of bashfulness or diffidence. He was perfectly at his ease, with something of a proud self-reliant consciousness in every movement; nothing in his manner could have reminded a spectator of the traditional apprentice making timid love to his master's daughter.

'I've seen you stand up to her though,' he said laughing. 'It's like all pious people. Doesn't it strike you as odd that they should never be content with being pious for themselves?'

He looked at her with bright sarcastic eyes.

'Oh, I know what you mean!' she said with an instant change of tone; 'I didn't mean anything of the sort. I think it's shocking of you to go to that place on Sundays—so there, Mr. Grieve.'

She threw herself back defiantly against the books which walled the shop, her arms folded before her. The attitude showed the long throat, the rounded bust, and the slender waist compressed with some evident rigour into a close-fitting brown dress. That Miss Purcell thought a great deal of the fashion of her hair, the style of her bodices, and the size of her waist was clear; that she was conscious of thinking about them to good purpose was also plain. But on the whole the impression of artificiality, of something over-studied and over-done which the first sight of her generally awakened, was soon, as a rule, lost in another more attractive—in one of light, tripping youth, perfectly satisfied with itself and with the world.

'I don't think you know much about the place,' he said quietly, still smiling.

She flushed, her foolish little sense of natural superiority to 'the assistant' outraged again, as it had been outraged already a hundred times since she and David Grieve had met.

'I know quite as much as anybody need know—any respectable person—' she maintained angrily. 'It's a low, disgraceful place—and they talk wicked nonsense. Everyone says so. It

doesn't matter a bit where Uncle Lomax goes—he's mad—but it *is* a shame he should lead other people astray.'

She was much pleased with her own harangue, and stood there frowning on him, her sharp little chin in the air, one foot beating the ground.

'Well, yes, really,' said David in a reflective tone; 'one would think Miss Dora had her hands full at home, without—'

He looked up, significantly, smiling. Lucy Purcell was enraged with him—with his hypocritical sympathy as to her uncle's misdoings—his avoidance of his own crime.

'It's not uncle at all, it's you!' she cried, with more logic than appeared. 'I tell you, Mr. Grieve, father won't stand it.'

The young man drew himself up from the counter.

'No,' he said with great equanimity, 'I suppose not.'

And taking up a parcel of books from the counter he turned away. Lucy, flurried and pouting, called after him.

'Mr. Grieve!'

'Yes.'

'I—I didn't mean it. I *hope* you won't go. I know father's hard. He's hard enough with me.'

And she raised her hands to her flushed face. David was terribly afraid she was going to cry. Several times since the orphan girl of seventeen had arrived from school three months before to take her place in her father's house, had she been on the point of confiding her domestic woes to David Grieve. But though under the terms of his agreement with her father, which included one meal in the back parlour, the assistant and she were often thrown together, he had till now instinctively held her aloof. His extraordinary good looks and masterful energetic ways had made an impression on her schoolgirl mind from the beginning. But for him she had no magnetism whatever. The little self-conceited creature knew it, or partially knew it, and smarted under it.

Now, he was just beginning an awkward sentence, when there was a sound at the outer door. With another look at him, half shy, half appealing, Lucy fled. Conscious of a distinct feeling of relief, David went to attend to the customer.

CHAPTER II

The customer was soon content and went out again into the rain. David mounted a winding iron stair which connected the downstairs shop with an upper room in which a large proportion of the books were stored. It was a long, low, rambling place made by throwing together all the little bits of rooms on the first floor of the old house. One corner of it had a special attraction for David. It was the corner where, ranged partly on the floor, partly on the shelves which ran under the windows,

lay the collection of books that Purcell had been making for his customer, Mr. Stephens.

Out of that collection Purcell's assistant had extracted a very varied entertainment. In the first place it had amused him to watch the laborious pains and anxiety with which his pious employer had gathered together the very sceptical works of which Mr. Stephens was in want, showing a knowledge of contents, and editions, and out-of-the-way profanities, under the stimulus of a paying customer, which drew many a sudden laugh from David when he was left to think of it in private.

In the next place the books themselves had been a perpetual feast to him for weeks, enjoyed all the more keenly because of the secrecy in which it had to be devoured. The little gathering represented with fair completeness the chief books of the French 'philosophers,' both in the original French, and in those English translations of which so plentiful a crop made its appearance during the fifty years before and after 1800. There, for instance, lay the seventy volumes of Voltaire. Close by was an imperfect copy of the Encyclopædia, which Mr. Stephens was getting cheap; on the other side a motley gathering of Diderot and Rousseau; while Holbach's 'System of Nature,' and Helvétius 'On the Mind,' held their rightful place among the rest.

Through these books, then, which had now been on the premises for some time—Mr. Stephens being a person of uncertain domicile, and unable as yet to find them a home—David had been freely ranging. Whenever Purcell was out of the way and customers were slack, he invariably found his way to this spot in the upper room. There, with his elbows on the top of the bookcase which ran under the window, and a book in front of him—or generally two, the original French and a translation—he had read Voltaire's tales, a great deal of the Encyclopædia, a certain amount of Diderot, for whom he cherished a passionate admiration, and a much smaller smattering of Rousseau. At the present moment he was grappling with the 'Dictionnaire Philosophique,' and the 'Système de la Nature,' fortified in both cases by English versions.

The gloom of the afternoon deepened, and the increasing rain had thinned the streets so much that during a couple of hours David had but three summonses from below to attend to. For the rest of the time he was buried in the second volume of the 'Dictionnaire Philosophique,' now skipping freely, now chewing and digesting, his eyes fixed vacantly on the darkening church outside. Above all, the article on *Contradictions* had absorbed and delighted him. There are few tones in themselves so fascinating to the nascent literary sense as this mock humility tone of Voltaire's. And in David's case all that passionate sense of a broken bubble and a scattered dream, which had haunted him so long after he left Kinder, had entered into and helped forward his infatuation with his new masters. They brought him an indescribable sense of freedom—omniscience almost.

For instance :-

'We must carefully distinguish in all writings, and especially in the sacred books, between real and apparent contradictions. Venturous critics have supposed a contradiction existed in that passage of Scripture which narrates how Moses changed all the waters of Egypt into blood, and how immediately afterwards the magicians of Pharaoh did the same thing, the book of Exodus allowing no interval at all between the miracle of Moses and the magical operation of the enchanters. Certainly it seems at first sight impossible that these magicians should change into blood what was already blood; but this difficulty may be avoided by supposing that Moses had allowed the waters to reassume their proper nature, in order to give time to Pharaoh to recover himself. This supposition is all the more plausible, seeing that the text, if it does not favour it expressly, is not opposed to it.

'The same sceptics ask how when all the horses had been killed by the hail in the sixth plague Pharaoh could pursue the Jews with cavalry. But this contradiction is not even apparent, because the hail, which killed all the horses in the fields, could not fall upon those which were in the stables.'

And so on through a long series of paragraphs, leading at last to matters specially dear to the wit of Voltaire, the contradictions between St. Luke and St. Matthew—in the story of the census of Quirinus, of the Magi, of the massacre of the Innocents, and what not—and culminating in this innocent conclusion:—

'After all it is enough that God should have deigned to reveal to us the principal mysteries of the faith, and that He should have instituted a Church in the course of time to explain them. All these contradictions, so often and so bitterly brought up against the Gospels, are amply noticed by the wisest commentators ; far from harming each other, one explains another ; they lend each other a mutual support, both in the concordance and in the harmony of the four Gospels'

David threw back his head with a laugh which came from the very depths of him. Then, suddenly, he was conscious of the church standing sombrely without, spectator as it seemed of his thoughts and of his mirth. Instantly his youth met the challenge by a rise of passionate scorn! What! a hundred years since Voltaire, and mankind still went on believing in all these follies and fables, in the ten plagues, in Balaam's ass, in the walls of Jericho, in miraculous births, and Magi, and prophetic stars!—in everything that the mockery of the eighteenth century had slain a thousand times over. Ah, well!—Voltaire knew as well as anybody that superstition is perennial, insatiable—a disease and weakness of the human mind which seems to be inherent and ineradicable. And there rose in the boy's memory lines he had opened upon that morning in a small Elizabethan folio he

had been cataloguing with much pains as a rarity—lines which had stuck in his mind—

> Vast superstition ! glorious style of weakness,
> Sprung from the deep disquiet of man's passion
> To dissolution and despair of Nature !—

He flung them out at the dark mass of building opposite, as though he were his namesake flinging at Goliath. Only a few months before that great church had changed masters—had passed from the hands of an aristocratic and inaccessible bishop of the old school into those of a man rich in all modern ideas and capacities, full of energy and enthusiasm, a scholar and administrator both. And *he* believed all those absurdities, David wanted to know? Impossible! No honest man could, thought the lad defiantly, with the rising colour of crude and vehement feeling, when his attention had been once challenged, and he had developed mind enough to know what the challenge meant.

Except, perhaps, Uncle Reuben and Dora Lomax, and people like that. He stood thinking and staring out of window, one idea leading to another. The thought of Reuben brought with it a certain softening of mood—the softening of memory and old association. Yes, he would like to see Uncle Reuben again—explain to him, perhaps, that old story—so old, so distant !—of his running away. Well, he *would* see him again, as soon as he got a place of his own, which couldn't be long now, whether Purcell gave him the sack or not. Instinctively, he felt for that inner pocket, which held his purse and his savings-bank book. Yes, he was near freedom now, whatever happened !

Then it occurred to him that it was unlucky he should have stumbled across Mr. Ancrum just at this particular juncture. The minister, of course, had friends at Clough End still. And he, David, didn't want Louie down upon him just yet—not just yet—for a month or two.

Then the smile which had begun to play about the mouth suddenly broadened into a merry triumph. When Louie knew all about him and his contrivances these last four years, wouldn't she be mad ! If she were to appear at this moment, he could tell her that she wore a pink dress at the 'wake' last week,—when she was at chapel last,—what young men were supposed to be courting her since the summer, and a number of other interesting particulars—

'Mr. Grieve ! Tea !'

His face changed. Reluctantly shutting his book and putting it into its place, he took his way to the staircase.

As David opened the swing door leading to the Purcells' parlour at the back of the shop he heard Miss Purcell saying in a mournful voice, 'It's no good, Dora ; not a haporth of good. Father won't let me. I might as well have gone to prison as come home.'

The assistant emerged into the bright gaslight of the little room as she spoke. There was another girl sitting beside Lucy, who got up with a shy manner and shook hands with him.

'Will you take your tea, Mr. Grieve?' said Lucy, with a pettish sigh, handing it to him, and then throwing herself vehemently back in her hostess's chair, behind the tea-tray. She let her hands hang over the arms of it—the picture of discontent. The gaslight showed her the possessor of bright brown eyes, under fine brows slenderly but clearly marked, of a pink and white skin slightly freckled, of a small nose quite passable, but no ways remarkable, of a dainty little chin, and a thin-lipped mouth, slightly raised at one corner, and opening readily over some irregular but very white teeth. Except for the eyes and eyebrows the features could claim nothing much in the way of beauty. Yet at this moment of seventeen—thanks to her clear colours, her small thinness, and the beautiful hair so richly piled about her delicate head—Lucy Purcell was undeniably a pretty girl, and since her arrival in Manchester she had been much more blissfully certain of the fact than she had ever succeeded in being while she was still under the repressive roof of Miss Pym's boarding-school for young ladies, Pestalozzi House, Blackburn.

David sat down, perceiving that something had gone very wrong, but not caring to inquire into it. His whole interest in the Purcell household was, in fact, dying out. He would not be concerned with it much longer.

So that, instead of investigating Miss Purcell's griefs, he asked her cousin whether it had not come on to rain. The girl opposite replied in a quiet, musical voice. She was plainly dressed in a black hat and jacket; but the hat had a little bunch of cowslips to light it up, and the jacket was of an ordinary fashionable cut. There was nothing particularly noticeable about the face at first sight, except its soft fairness and the gentle steadfastness of the eyes. The movements were timid, the speech often hesitating. Yet the impression which, on a first meeting, this timidity was apt to leave on a spectator was very seldom a lasting one. David's idea of Miss Lomax, for instance, had radically changed during the three months since he had made acquaintance with her.

Rain, it appeared, *had* begun, and there must be umbrellas and waterproofs for the evening's excursion. As the two others were settling at what time David Grieve and Lucy should call for Dora in Market Place, Lucy woke up from a dream, and broke in upon them.

'And, Dora, you know, I *could* have worn that dress with the narrow ribbons I showed you last week. It's all there—upstairs—in the cupboard—not a crease in it!'

Dora could not help laughing, and the laugh sent a charming light into her grey, veiled eyes. The tone was so inexpressibly doleful, the manner so childish. David smiled too, and his eyes and Dora's met in a sort of friendly understanding—the first

time, perhaps, they had so met. Then they both turned themselves to the task of consolation. The assistant inquired what was the matter.

'I wanted her to go with me to the dance at the Mechanics' Institute next week,' said Dora. 'Mrs. Alderman Head would have taken us both. It's very nice and respectable. I didn't think uncle would mind. But Lucy's sure he will.'

'Sure! Of course I'm sure,' said Lucy sharply. 'I've heard him talk about dancing in a way to make anybody sick. If he only knew all the dancing we had at Pestalozzi House!'

'Does he think all dancing wrong?' inquired David.

'Yes—unless it's David dancing before the Ark, or some such nonsense,' replied Lucy, with the same petulant gloom.

David laughed out. Then he fell into a brown study, one hand playing with his tea-cup, an irrepressible smile still curving about his mouth. Dora, observing him across the table, could not but remember other assistants of Uncle Purcell whom she had seen sitting in that same place, and the airs which Miss Purcell in her rare holidays had given herself towards those earlier young men. And now, this young man, whenever Purcell himself was out of the way, was master of the place. Anyone could see that, so long as he was there, Lucy was sensitively conscious of him in all that she said or did.

She did not long endure his half-mocking silence now.

'You see, Dora,' she began again, with an angry glance towards him, 'father's worse than ever just now. He's been so aggravated.'

'Yes,' said Dora timidly. She perfectly understood what was meant, but she shrank from pursuing the subject. But David looked up.

'I should be very sorry, I'm sure, Miss Purcell, to get in your way at all, or cause you any unpleasantness, if that's what you mean. I don't think you'll be annoyed with me long.'

He spoke with a boyish exaggerated dignity. It became him, however, for his fine and subtle physique somehow supported and endorsed it.

Both the girls started. Lucy looked suddenly as miserable as she had before looked angry. But in her confused state of feeling she renewed her attack.

'I don't understand anything about it,' she said, with plaintive incoherence. 'Only I can't *think* why people should always be making disturbances. Dora! Doesn't *everybody* you know think it wicked to go to the Hall of Science?'

She drew herself up peremptorily. David resumed the half smiling, half meditative attitude which had provoked her before. Dora looked from one to the other, a pure bright colour rising in her cheek.

'I don't know anything about that,' she said in a low voice. 'I don't think that would matter, Lucy. But, oh, I do wish father wouldn't go—and Mr. Grieve wouldn't go.'

Her voice and hand shook. Lucy looked triumphantly at David. Instinctively she realised that, especially of late, David had come to feel more respectfully towards Dora than she had ever succeeded in making him feel towards herself. In the beginning of their acquaintance he had often launched into argument with Dora about religious matters, especially about the Ritualistic practices in which she delighted. The lad, overflowing with his Voltaire and d'Holbach, had not been able to forbear, and had apparently taken a mischievous pleasure in shocking a bigot—as he had originally conceived Lucy Purcell's cousin to be. The discussion, indeed, had not gone very far. The girl's horror and his own sense of his position and its difficulties had checked them in the germ. Moreover, as has been said, his conception of Dora had gradually changed on further acquaintance. As for her, she had now for a long time avoided arguing with him, which made her outburst on the present occasion the more noticeable.

He looked up quickly.

'Miss Lomax, how do you suppose one makes up one's mind—either about religion or anything else? Isn't it by hearing both sides?'

'Oh, no—no!' she said, shrinking. 'Religion isn't like anything else. It's by—by growing up into it—by thinking about it—and doing what the Church tells you. You come to *know* it's true.'

That the Magi and Balaam's ass are true! What folly! But somehow even his youthful ardour could not say it, so full of pure and tremulous pain was the gaze fixed upon him. And, indeed, he had no time for any answer, for she had just spoken when the bell of the outer door sounded, and a step came rapidly through the shop.

'Father!' said Lucy, lifting the lid of the teapot in a great hurry. 'Oh, I wonder if the tea's good enough.'

She was stirring it anxiously with a spoon, when Purcell entered, a tall heavily built man, with black hair, a look of command, and a step which shook the little back room as he descended into it. He touched Dora's hand with a pompous politeness, and then subsided into his chair opposite Lucy, complaining about the weather, and demanding tea, which his daughter gave him with a timid haste, looking to see whether he were satisfied as he raised the first spoonful to his lips.

'Anything worth buying?' said David to his employer. He was leaning back in his chair, with his arm round the back of another. Again Dora was reminded by contrast of some of the nervous lads she had seen in that room before, scarcely daring to eat their tea under Purcell's eye, flying to cut him bread, or pass him the sugar.

'No,' said Purcell curtly.

'And a great price, I suppose?'

Purcell looked up. Apparently the ease of the young man's

tone and attitude put the finishing stroke to an inward process already far advanced.

'The price, I conceive, is *my* business,' he said, in his most overbearing manner. 'When you have to pay, it will be yours.'

David flushed, without, however, changing his position, and Lucy made a sudden commotion among the teacups.

'Father,' she said, with a hurried agitation which hardly allowed her to pick up the cup she had thrown over, 'Dora and I want to speak to you. You mustn't talk business at tea. Oh, I *know* you won't let me go; but I *should* like it, and Dora's come to ask. I shouldn't want a new dress, and it will be *most* respectable, everyone says; and I *did* learn dancing at school, though you didn't know it. Miss Georgina said it was stuff and nonsense, and I must—'

'What *is* she talking about?' said Purcell to Dora, with an angry glance at Lucy.

'I want to take her to a dance,' said Dora quietly, 'if you would let her come. There's one at the Mechanics' Institute next week, given by the Unicorn benefit society. Mrs. Alderman Head said I might go with her, and Lucy too if you'll let her come. I've got a ticket.'

'I'm much obliged to Mrs. Alderman Head,' said Purcell sarcastically. 'Lucy knows very well what I think of an unchristian and immodest amusement. Other people must decide according to their conscience. *I* judge nobody.'

At this point David got up, and disappeared into the shop.

'Oh yes, you do judge, uncle,' cried Dora, roused at last, and colouring. 'You're always judging. You call everything unchristian you don't like, whether its dancing, or—or—early celebration, or organ music, or altar-cloths. But you can't be always right—nobody can.'

Purcell surveyed her with a grim composure.

'If you suppose I make any pretence to be infallible, you are quite mistaken,' he said, with slow solemnity—no one in disclaiming Papistry could have been more the Pope—'I leave that to your priests at St. Damian's, Dora. But there *is* an infallible guide, both for you and for me, and that's the Holy Scriptures. If you can show me any place where the *Bible* approves of promiscuous dancing between young Christian men and women, or of a woman exposing her person for admiration's sake, or of such vain and idle talking as is produced by these entertainments, I will let Lucy go. But you can't. "Whose adorning let it not be—"'

And he quoted the Petrine admonition with a harsh triumphant emphasis on every syllable, looking hard all the time at Dora, who had risen, and stood confronting him in a tremor of impatience and disagreement.

'Father Russell—' she began quickly, then changed her form of expression—'Mr. Russell says you can't settle things by just quoting a text. The Bible has to be explained, he says.'

Purcell's eyes flamed. He launched into a sarcastic harangue, delivered in a strong thick voice, on the subject of 'Sacerdotalism,' 'priestly arrogance,' 'lying traditions,' 'making the command of God of no effect,' and so forth. While his sermon rolled along, Dora stood nervously tying her bonnet strings, or buttoning her gloves. Her heart was full of a passionate scorn. Beside the bookseller's muscular figure and pugnacious head she saw with her mind's eye the spare forms and careworn faces of the young priests at St. Damian's. Outraged by this loud-voiced assurance, she called to mind the gentleness, the suavity, the delicate consideration for women which obtained among her friends.

'There's not a pin to choose,' Purcell wound up, brutally, 'between you and that young infidel in there,' and he jerked his thumb towards the shop. 'It all comes of pride. He's bursting with his own wisdom,—you will have the "Church" and won't have the Bible. What's the Church !—a pack of sinners, and a million sinners are no better than one.'

'Good-bye, Lucy,' said Dora, stooping to kiss her cousin, and not trusting herself to speak. 'Call for me at the quarter.'

Lucy hardly noticed her kiss, she sat with her elbows on the table, holding her little chin disconsolately, something very like tears in her eyes. In the first place, she was reflecting dolefully that it was all true—she was never to have any amusement like other girls—never to have any good of her life ; she might as well be a nun at once. In the second, she was certain her father meant to send young Grieve away, and the prospect drew a still darker pall over a prospect dark enough in all conscience before.

Purcell opened the door for Dora more punctiliously than usual, and came back to the hearthrug still inflated as it were with his own eloquence. Meanwhile Lucy was washing up the tea things. The little servant had brought her a bowl of water and an apron, and Lucy was going gingerly through an operation she detested. Why shouldn't Mary Ann do it? What was the good of going to school and coming back with Claribel's songs and Blumenthal's *Deux Anges* lying on the top of your box,—with a social education, moreover, so advanced that the dancing-mistress had invariably made you waltz alone round the room for the edification and instruction of the assembled company,—if all you had to do at home was to dust and wash up, and die with envy of girls with reprobate fathers? As she pondered the question, Lucy began to handle the cups with a more and more unfriendly energy.

'You'll break some of that china, Lucy !' said Purcell, at last disturbed in his thoughts. 'What's the matter with you?'

'Nothing !' said Lucy, taking, however, a saucer from the line as she spoke so viciously that the rest of them slipped with a clatter and only just escaped destruction.

'Mind what you're about,' cried Purcell angrily, fearing for the household stuff that had been in the establishment so much longer and was so much more at home there than Lucy.

'I know what it is,' he said, looking at her severely, while his great black presence seemed to fill the little room. 'You've lost your temper because I refused to let you go to the dance.'

Lucy was silent for a moment, trying to contain herself; then she broke out like a child, throwing down her apron, and feeling for her handkerchief.

'It's *too* bad—it's *too* bad—I'd rather be Mary Ann—*she's* got friends, and evenings out—and—and parties sometimes; and I see nobody, and go nowhere. What did you have me home for at all?'

And she sat down and dried her eyes piteously. She was in real distress, but she liked a scene, and Purcell knew her peculiarities. He surveyed her with a sort of sombre indulgence.

'You're a vain child of this world, Lucy. If I didn't keep a look-out on you, you'd soon go rejoicing down the broad way. What do you mean about amusements? There's the missionary tea to-morrow night, and the magic-lantern at the schools on Saturday.'

Lucy gave a little hysterical laugh.

'Well,' said Purcell loudly, 'there'll be plenty of young people there. What have you got to say against them?'

'A set of *frights* and *gawks*,' said Lucy, sitting bolt upright in a state of flat mutiny, and crushing her handkerchief on her knee between a pair of trembling hands. 'The way they do their hair, and the way they tie their ties, and the way they put a chair for you—it's enough to make one faint. At the Christmas treat there was one young man asked me to trim his shirt-cuffs for him with scissors he took out of his pocket. I told him *I* wasn't his nurse, and people who weren't dressed ought to stay at home. You should have seen how he and his sister glared at me afterwards. I don't care! None of the chapel people like me—I know they don't, and I don't want them to, and I wouldn't *marry* one of them.'

The gesture of Lucy's curly head was superb.

'It seems to me,' said Purcell sarcastically, 'that what you mostly learnt at Blackburn was envy, malice, and all uncharitableness. As to marrying, child, the less you think of it for the present the better, till you get more sense.'

But the eyes which studied her were not unkindly. Purcell liked this slim red and white creature who belonged to him, whose education had cost him hard money which it gave him pleasure to reckon up, and who promised now to provide him with a fresh field for the management and the coarse moral experiment which he loved. She would be restive at first, but he would soon break her in. The idea that under her folly and childishness she might possibly inherit some of his own tenacity never occurred to him.

'I can't imagine,' said Lucy inconsequently, with eyes once more swimming, 'why you can't let me do what Dora does! She's *much* better than I am. She's a saint, she is. She's

always going to church; she's always doing things for poor people; she never thinks about herself, or whether she's pretty, or— Why shouldn't I dance if she does?'

Purcell laughed.

'Aye!' he said grimly, 'that's the Papistical way all over. So many services, so much fasting, so much money, so much knocking under to your priest, so much "church work"—and who cares a brass farthing what you do with the rest of your time? Do as I tell you, and dance away! But I tell you, Christianity wants *a new heart!*'

And the bookseller looked at his daughter with a frowning severity. Conversation of this kind was his recreation, his accomplishment, so to speak. He had been conducting a difficult negotiation all day of the diamond-cut-diamond order, and was tired out and disgusted by the amount of knowledge of books which even a gentleman may possess. But here was compensation. A warm hearthrug, an unwilling listener, and this sense of an incomparable soundness of view,—he wanted nothing more to revive him, unless, indeed, it were a larger audience.

As for Lucy, as she looked up at her father, even her childish intelligence rose to a sense of absurdity. As if Dora hadn't a new heart; as if Dora thought it was enough to go to church and give sixpences in the offertory!

But her father overawed her. She had been left motherless at ten years old, and brought up since away from home, except for holidays. At the bottom of her she was quite conscious that she knew nothing at all about this big contemptuous person, who ordered her about and preached to her, and never let himself be kissed and played with and coaxed as other girls' fathers did.

So she went on with her washing up in a crushed silence, very sorry for herself in a vague passionate way, the corners of her mouth drooping. Purcell too fell into a reverie, the lower jaw pushed forward, one hand playing with the watch-chain which adorned his black suit.

'Did you give Grieve that message?' he asked at last.

Lucy, still sulky, nodded in reply.

'What time did he come in from dinner?'

'On the stroke of the half-hour,' said Lucy quickly. 'I think he keeps time better than anybody you ever had, father.'

'Insolent young whelp!' said Purcell in a slow, deliberate voice. 'He was at that place again yesterday.'

'Yes, I know he was,' said Lucy, with evident agitation. 'I told him he ought to have been ashamed.'

'Oh, you talked to him, did you? What business had you to do that, I wonder? Well, what did he say?'

'He said—well, I don't know what he said. He don't seem to think it matters to anybody where he goes on Sunday!'

'Oh, indeed—don't he? I'll show him some cause to doubt the truth of that proposition,' said Purcell ponderously; 'or I'll know the reason why.'

Lucy looked unhappy, and said nothing for a minute or two. Then she began insistently, 'Well, *does* it matter to you?'

This deplorable question—viewed from the standpoint of a Baptist elder—passed unnoticed, for with the last words the shop-bell rang, and Purcell went off, transformed on the instant into the sharp, attentive tradesman.

Lucy sat wiping her cups mechanically for a little while. Then, when they were all done, and Mary Ann had been loftily commanded to put them away, she slipped upstairs to her own room, a little attic at the top of the house. Here she went to a deal press, which had been her mother's, opened it, and took out a dress which hung in a compartment by itself, enveloped in a holland wrapper, lest Manchester smuts should harm it. She undid the wrapper, and laid it on the bed. It was an embroidered white muslin, adorned with lace and full knots of narrow pink ribbon.

'What a trouble I had to get the ribbon just that width,' she thought to herself ruefully, 'and everybody said it was so uncommon. I might as well give it Dora. I don't believe I shall ever wear it. I don't know what'll become of me. I don't get any chances.'

And shaking her head mournfully from side to side, she sat on beside the dress, in the light of her solitary candle, her hands clasped round her knee, the picture of girlish despair, so far as anything so daintily gowned, and shoed, and curled, could achieve it. She was thinking drearily of some people who were coming to supper, one of her father's brother elders at the chapel, Mr. Baruch Barton, and his daughter. Mr. Barton had a specialty for the prophet Zephaniah, and had been several times shocked because Lucy could not help him out with his quotations from that source. His daughter, a little pinched asthmatic creature, in a dress whereof every gore and seam was an affront to the art of dressmaking, was certainly thirty, probably more. And between thirty and the Psalmist's limit of existence, there is the very smallest appreciable difference, in the opinion of seventeen. What *could* she have to say to Emmy Barton? Lucy asked herself. She began yawning from sheer dulness, as she thought of her. If it were only time to go to bed!

Suddenly she heard a sound of raised voices in the upper shop on the floor below. What could it be? She started up. 'Mr. Grieve and father quarrelling!' She knew it must come to that!

She crept down the stairs with every precaution possible till she came to the door behind which the loud talk which had startled her was going on. Here she listened with all her ears, but at first to very little purpose. David was speaking, but so rapidly, and apparently so near to the other end of the room, that she could hear nothing. Then her father broke in, and by dint of straining very hard, she caught most of what he said before the whole colloquy came abruptly to an end. She heard

Purcell's heavy tread descending the little iron spiral staircase leading from the lower shop to the upper. She heard David moving about, as though he were gathering up books and papers, and then, with a loud childish sob which burst from her unawares, she ran upstairs again to her own room.

'Oh, he's going, he's going!' she cried under her breath, as she stood before the glass winking to keep the tears back, and biting her handkerchief hard between her little white teeth. 'Oh, what shall I do? what shall I do? It'll be always the same; just when anyone *might* like me, it all stops. And he won't care one little, little bit. He'll never think of me again. Oh, I do think somebody might care about me—might be sorry for me!'

And she locked her hands tight before her, and stared at the glass, while the tears forced their way. But all the time she was noticing how prettily she stood, how slim she was. And though she smarted, she would not for the world have been without her smart, her excitement, her foolish secret, which, for sheer lack of something to do and think about, had suddenly grown to such magnitude in her eyes. It was hard to cherish a hopeless passion for a handsome youth, without a halfpenny, who despised you, but it was infinitely better than to have nothing in your mind but Emmy Barton and the prophet Zephaniah. Nay, as she washed her hands and smoothed her dress and hair with trembling fingers, she became quite friendly with her pain—in a sense, even proud of it, and jealous for it. It was a sign of mature life—of something more than mere school-girlishness. Like the lover in the Elizabethan sonnet, 'She had been vexed, if vexed she had not been!'

CHAPTER III

'Come in, David,' said Mr. Ancrum, opening the door of his little sitting-room in Mortimer Street. 'You're rather late, but I don't wonder. Such a wind! I could hardly stand against it myself. But, then, I'm an atomy. What, no top-coat in such weather! What do you mean by that, sir? You're wet through. There, dry yourself.'

David, with a grin at Mr. Ancrum's unnecessary concern for him, deposited himself in the carpet chair which formed the minister's only lounge, and held out his legs and arms to the blaze. He was wet indeed, and bespattered with the blackest mud in the three kingdoms. But the battle with wind and rain had so brought into play all the physical force of him, had so brightened eye and cheek, and tossed the black hair into such a fine confusion, that, as he sat there bending over the glow of the fire, the crippled man opposite, sickly with long confinement and over-thinking, could not take his eyes from him. The storm with all its freshness, youth with all its reckless joy in itself,

seemed to have come in with the lad and transformed the little dingy room.

'What do you wear trash like that for in a temperature like this?' said the minister, touching his guest's thin and much-worn coat. 'Don't you know, David, that your health is money? Suppose you get lung trouble, who's to look after you?'

'It don't do me no harm, sir. I can't get into my last year's coat, and I couldn't afford a new one this winter.'

'What wages do you earn?' asked Ancrum. His manner was a curious mixture of melancholy gentleness and of that terse sharpness in practical things which the south country resents and the north country takes for granted.

'Eighteen shillings a week, since last November, sir.'

'That ought to be enough for a top-coat, you rascal, with only yourself to feed,' said Mr. Ancrum, stretching himself in his hard armchair, so as to let his lame leg with its heavy boot rest comfortably on the fender. David had noticed at first sight of him that his old playfellow had grown to look much older than in the Clough End days. His hair was nearly white, and lay in a large smooth wave across the broad brow. And in that brow there were deep furrows, and many a new and premature line in the hollow cheeks. Something withering and blighting seemed to have passed over the whole man since those Sunday school lessons in the Christian Brethren's upper room, which David still remembered so well. But the eyes with their irresistible intensity and force were the same. In them the minister's youth—he was not yet thirty-five—still spoke, as from a last stronghold in a failing realm. They had a strange look too, the look as of a secret life, not for the passer-by.

David smiled at Ancrum's last remark, and for a moment or two looked into the fire without speaking.

'Well, if I'd bought clothes or anything else this winter, I should be in a precious worse hole than I am,' he said reflectively.

'Hole? What's wrong, Davy?'

'My master gave me the sack Monday.'

'Humph!' said Ancrum, surveying him. 'Well, you don't look much cast down about it, I must say.'

'Well, you see, I'd laid my plans,' said the young man, an irrepressible gaiety and audacity in every feature. 'It isn't as though I were taken by surprise.'

'Plans for a new place, I suppose?'

'No; I have done with that. I am going to set up for myself. I know the trade, and I've got some money.'

'How old are you, Davy?'

'Just upon twenty,' said the lad, quietly.

The minister pursed up his lips and whistled a little.

'Well, that's bold,' he said. 'Somehow I like it, though by all the laws of prudence I ought to jump down your throat for announcing such a thing. But how did you get your money? and what have you been doing these four years? Come, I'm an

old friend,—though I dare say you don't think me much of a fellow. Out with it! Pay me anyway for all those ships I made you long ago.'

And he held out his blanched hand, little more now than skin and bone. David put his own into it awkwardly enough. At this period of his life he was not demonstrative.

The story he had to tell was, to Ancrum's thinking, a remarkable one. He had come into Manchester on an October evening with five shillings and threepence in his pocket. From a point on the south-western border of the city he took a 'bus for Deansgate and Victoria Street. As he was sitting on the top, feeding his eyes on the lights and the crowd of the streets, but wholly ignorant where to go and what first step to take, he fell into talk with a decent working-man and his wife sitting beside him. The result of the talk was that they offered him shelter at fourpence a night. He dismounted with them at Blackfriars Bridge, and they made their way across the river to a street in Salford, where he lodged with them for a week. During that week he lived on oatmeal and an occasional baked potato, paying his hostess eighteenpence additional for the use of her fire, and the right to sit in her kitchen when he was not tramping about in search of work. By the end of the week he had found a post as errand-boy at a large cheap bookseller's and stationer's in Deansgate, at eight shillings a week, his good looks, manner, and education evidently helping him largely, as Mr. Ancrum could perceive through the boy's very matter-of-fact account of himself. He then made an agreement for bed, use of fire, and kitchen, with his new friends at four shillings a week, and by the end of six months he was receiving a wage of fourteen shillings as salesman and had saved close on five pounds.

'Well, now, come, how did you manage that, Davy?' said Mr. Ancrum, interrupting. 'Don't run on in that fashion. Details are the only interesting things in life, and details I'll have. You must have found it a precious tight fit to save that five pounds.'

Whereupon David, his eye kindling, ran out Benjamin Franklin and the 'Vegetarian News,' his constant friends from the first day of his acquaintance with the famous autobiography till now, in spite of such occasional lapses into carnal feeding as he had confessed to Daddy. In a few minutes Ancrum found himself buried in 'details' as to 'flesh-forming' and 'bone-forming' foods, as to nitrogen and albumen, as to the saving qualities of fruit, and Heaven knows what besides. Long before the enthusiast had spent his breath or his details, the minister cried 'Enough!'

'Young materialist,' he said growling, 'what do you mean at your age by thinking so much about your body?'

'It wasn't my body, sir,' said David, simply, 'it was just business. If I had got ill, I couldn't have worked; if I had lived like other chaps, I couldn't have saved. So I had to know

something about it, and it wasn't bad fun. After a bit I got the people I lodged with to eat a lot of the things I eat—and that was cheaper for me of course. The odd thing about vegetarian ism is that you come not to care a rap what you eat. Your taste goes somehow. So long as you're nourished and can do your work, that's all you want.'

The minister sat studying his visitor a minute or two in silence, though the eyes under the care-worn brow were bright and restless. Any defiance of the miserable body was in itself delightful to a man who had all but slain himself many times over in the soul's service. He, too, had been living on a crust for months, denying himself first this, then that ingredient of what should have been an invalid's diet. But it had been for cause—for the poor—for self-mortification. There was something just a little jarring to the ascetic in this contact with a self-denial of the purely rationalistic type, so easy—so cheerful—put forward without the smallest suspicion of merit, as a mere business measure.

David resumed his story. By the end of another six months it appeared that he had grown tired of his original shop, with its vast masses of school stationery and cheap new books. As might have been expected from his childish antecedents, he had been soon laid hold of by the old bookstalls, had read at them on his way from work, had spent on them all that he could persuade himself to spare from his hoard, and in a year from the time he entered Manchester, thanks to wits, reading, and chance friendships, was already a budding bibliophile. Slates and primers became suddenly odious to a person aware of the existence of Aldines and Elzevirs, and bitten with the passion, then just let loose on the book-buying world, for first editions of the famous books of the century. Whenever that sum in the savings bank should have reached a certain height, he would become a second-hand bookseller with a stall. Till then he must save more and learn his trade. So at the end of his first year he left his employers, and by the help of excellent recommendations from them got the post of assistant in Purcell's shop in Half Street, at a rise of two shillings, afterwards converted into four shillings a week.

'And I've been there three years—very near,' said David, straightening himself with a little nervous gesture peculiar to him. 'If you'd been anywhere about, sir, you'd have wondered how I could have stayed so long. But I wanted to learn the trade and I've learnt it—no thanks to old Purcell.'

'What was wrong with him?'

'Mostly brains!' said the lad, with a scornful but not unattractive conceit. 'He was a hard master to live with—that don't matter. But he is a fool! I don't mean to say he don't know a lot about some things—but he thinks he knows everything—and he don't. And he'll not let anyone tell him—not he! Once, if you'll believe it, he got the Aldine Virgil of 1501, for twenty-five shillings—came from a gentleman out Eccles way—a fellow sell-

ing his father's library and didn't know bad from good,—real fine tall copy,—binding poor,—but a *stunner* take it altogether—worth twenty pounds to Quaritch or Ellis, any day. Well, all I could do, he let a man have it for five shillings profit next day, just to spite me, I believe, because I told him it was a good thing. Then he got sick about that, I believe, though he never let out, and the next time he found anything that looked good,—giminy!—but he put it on. Now you know, sir'—Mr. Ancrum smiled at the confidential eagerness of the expert—'you know, sir, it's not many of those Venice or Florence Dantes that are worth anything. If you get the first edition of Landino's 'Commentary,' or the other man's, Imola's, isn't it—'

The minister lifted his eyebrows—the Italian came out pat, and, so far as he knew, right—

'Well, of course, *they're* worth money—always fetch their price. But the later editions are no good at all—nobody but a gentleman-collector, very green, you know, sir'—the twinkle in the boy's eye showed how much his subject was setting him at his ease—'would be bothered with them. Well, if he didn't get hold of an edition of 1540 or so—worth about eight shillings, and dear at that—and send it up to one of the London men as a good thing. He makes me pack it and send it and *register* it—you might have thought it was the Mazarin Bible, bar size. And then, of course, next day, down comes the book again flying, double quick. I kept out of his way, post-time! But I'd have given something to see the letter he got.'

And David, rising, put his hands in his pockets, and stood before the fire chuckling with irrepressible amusement.

'Well, then you know there's the first editions of Rousseau—not a bit rare, as rare goes—lucky if you get thirty shillings for the "Contrat Social," or the "Nouvelle Héloïse," even good copies—'

Again the host's eyebrows lifted. The French names ran remarkably; there was not the least boggling over them. But he said nothing, and David rattled on, describing, with a gusto which never failed, one of Purcell's book-selling enormities after another. It was evident that he despised his master with a passionate contempt. It was evident also that Purcell had shown a mean and unreasoning jealousy of his assistant. The English tradesman inherits a domineering tradition towards his subordinates, and in Purcell's case, as we know, the instincts of an egotistical piety had reinforced those of the employer. Yet Mr. Ancrum felt some sympathy with Purcell.

'Well, Davy,' he said at last, 'so you were too 'cute for your man, that's plain. But I don't suppose he put it on that ground when he gave you the sack?'

And he looked up, with a little dry smile.

'No!' cried David, abruptly. 'No! not he. If you go and ask *him* he'll tell you he sent me off because I would go to the Secularist meetings at the Hall of Science, and air myself as an

atheist; that's his way of putting it. And it was doing him harm with his religious customers! As if I was going to let him dictate where I went on Sundays!'

'Of course not,' said Ancrum, with a twist of his oddly shaped mouth. 'Even the very youngest of us might sometimes be the better for advice; but, hang it, let's be free—free to "make fools of ourselves," as a wise man hath it. Well, Davy, no offence,' for his guest had flushed suddenly. 'So you go to the Hall of Science? Did you hear Holyoake and Brad laugh there the other night? You like that kind of thing?'

'I like to hear it,' said the lad, stoutly, meeting his old teacher's look, half nervously, half defiantly. 'It's a great deal more lively than what you hear at most churches, sir. And why shouldn't one hear everything?'

This was not precisely the tone which the same culprit had adopted towards Dora Lomax. The Voltairean suddenly felt himself to be making excuses—shabby excuses—in the presence of somebody connected, however distantly, with *l'infâme.* He drew himself up with an angry shake of his whole powerful frame.

'Oh, why not?' said Ancrum, with a shrug, 'if life's long enough'—and he absently lifted and let fall a book which lay on the table beside him; it was Newman's 'Dream of Gerontius'—'if life's long enough, and—happy enough! Well, so you've been learning French, I can hear. Teaching yourself?'

'No; there's an old Frenchman, old Barbier—do you know him, sir? He gives lessons at a shilling an hour. Very few people go to him now; they want younger men. And there's lot's of them about. But old Barbier knows more about books than any of them, I'll be bound.'

'Has he introduced you to French novels? I never read any; but they're bad, of course—must be. In all those things I'm a Britisher and believe what the Britishers say.'

'We're just at the end of "Manon Lescaut,"' said David, doggedly. 'And partly with him, partly by myself, I've read a bit of Rousseau—and a good lot of Diderot,—and Voltaire.'

David threw an emphasis into the last name, which was meant to atone to himself for the cowardice of a few minutes before. The old boyish feeling towards Mr. Ancrum, which had revived in him when he entered the room, had gradually disappeared again. He bore the minister no real grudge for having forgotten him, but he wished it to be clearly understood that the last fragments of the Christian Brethren yoke had dropped from his neck.

'Ah! don't know anything about them,' said Ancrum, slowly; 'but then, as you know, I'm a very ignorant person. Well, now, was it Voltaire took you to the secularists, or the secularists to Voltaire?'

David laughed, but did not give a reply immediately.

'Well, never mind,' said the minister. 'All Christians are

fools, of course—that's understood.—Is that all you have been learning these four years?'

'I work at Latin every morning,' said David, very red, and on his dignity. 'I've begun Greek, and I go to the science classes, mathematics and chemistry, at the Mechanics' Institute.'

Mr. Ancrum's face softened.

'Why, I'll be bound you have to go to work pretty early, Davy?'

'Seven o'clock, sir, I take the shutters down. But I get an hour and a half first, and three hours in the evening. This winter I've got through the "Æneid," and Horace's "Epistles" and "Ars Poetica." Do you remember, sir?'—and the lad's voice grew sharp once more, tightening as it were under the pressure of eagerness and ambition from beneath—'do you remember that Scaliger read the "Iliad" in twenty days, and was a finished Greek scholar in two years? Why can't one do that now?'

'Why shouldn't you?' said Mr. Ancrum, looking up at him. 'Who helps you in your Greek?'

'No one; I get translations.'

'Well, now, look here, Davy. I'm an ignorant person, as I told you, but I learnt some Latin and Greek at Manchester New College. Come to me in the evenings, and I'll help you with your Greek, unless you've got beyond me. Where are you?'

The budding Scaliger reported himself. He had read the 'Anabasis,' some Herodotus, three plays of Euripides, and was now making some desperate efforts on Æschylus and Sophocles. Any Plato? David made a face. He had read two or three dialogues in English; didn't want to go on, didn't care about him. Ah! Ancrum supposed not.

'Twelve hours' shop,' said the minister reflecting, 'more or less,—two hours' work before shop,—three hours or so after shop; that's what you may call driving it hard. You couldn't do it, Richard Ancrum,' and he shook his head with a whimsical melancholy. 'But you were always a poor starveling. Youth that *is* youth 's tough. Don't tell me, sir,' and he looked up sharply, 'that you don't amuse yourself. I wouldn't believe it. There never was a man built like you yet that didn't amuse himself.'

David smiled, but said nothing.

'Billiards?'

'No, sir.'

'Betting?'

'No, sir. They cost money.'

'Niggardly dog! Drink?—no, I'll answer that for myself.'

The minister dropped his catechism, and sat nursing his lame leg and thinking. Suddenly he broke out with, 'How many young women are you in love with, David?'

David showed his white teeth.

'I only know two, sir. One's my master's daughter—she's rather a pretty girl, I think—'

'That'll do. You're not in love with her. Who's the other?'

'The other's Mr. Lomax's daughter,—Lomax of the Parlour,

that queer restaurant, sir, in Market Place. She—well, I don't know how to describe her. She's not good-looking—at least, I don't think so,' he added dubiously. 'She's very High Church, and fasts all Lent. I think she does Church embroidery.'

'And doesn't think any the better of you for attending the Hall of Science? Sensible girl! Still, when people mean to fall in love, they don't think twice of that sort of thing. I make a note of Lomax's daughter. Ah! enter supper. David, if you let any 'ism stand between you and that veal pie, I despair of your future.'

David, however, in the course of the meal, showed himself as superior to narrowness of view in the matter of food-stuffs as in other matters. The meal went merrily. Mr. Ancrum dropped his half-sarcastic tone, and food, warmth, and talk loosened the lad's fibres, and made him more and more human, handsome, and attractive. Soon his old friend knew all that he wanted to know,—the sum David had saved—thirty pounds in the savings-bank—the sort of stock he meant to set up, the shop he had taken—with a stall, of course—no beginner need hope to prosper without a stall. Customers must be delicately angled for at a safe distance—show yourself too much, and, like trout, they flashed away. See everything, force nothing. Let a book be turned over for nineteen days, the chances were that on the twentieth you would turn over the price. As to expecting the class of cheap customers to commit themselves by walking into a shop, it was simple madness. Of course, when you were 'established,' that was another matter.

By the help of a certain wealthy Unitarian, one Mr. Doyle, with whom he had made friends in Purcell's shop, and whom he had boldly asked for the use of his name as a reference, the lad had taken—so it appeared—a small house in Potter Street, a narrow but frequented street in the neighbourhood of Deansgate and all the great banks and insurance offices in King Street. His shop took up the ground floor. The two floors above were let, and the tenants would remain. But into the attics and the parlour kitchen behind the shop, he meant, ultimately, when he could afford it, to put himself and his sister. He could only get the house on a yearly tenancy, as it and the others near it were old, and would probably be rebuilt before long. But meanwhile the rent was all the lower because of the insecurity of tenure.

At the mention of the boy's sister, Ancrum looked up with a start.

'Ah, to be sure! What became of that poor child after you left? The Clough End friends who wrote to me of your disappearance had more pity for her, Davy, than they had for you.'

A sudden repulsion and reserve darkened the black eyes opposite.

'There was no helping it,' he said with hasty defiance. There was a moment's silence. Then a wish to explain himself rose in David.

'I couldn't have stayed, sir,' he said, with a curious half-reproachful accent. 'I told you about how it was before you left. And there were other things. I should have cut my own throat or some one else's if it had gone on. But I haven't forgotten Louie. You remember Tom Mullins at the foundry. He's written me every month. I paid him for it. I know all about Louie, and they don't know anything about me. They think I'm in America.'

His eyes lit again with the joy of contrivance.

'Is that kind, Davy?'

'Yes, sir—' and for the first time the minister heard in the boy's voice the tone of a man's judgment. 'I couldn't have Louie on me just yet. I was going to ask you, sir, not to tell the people at Clough End you've seen me. It would make it very hard. You know what Louie is—and she's all right. She's learnt a trade.'

'What trade?'

'Silk-weaving—from Margaret Dawson.'

'Poor soul—poor saint! There'd be more things than her trade to be learnt from Margaret Dawson if anyone had a mind to learn them. What of 'Lias?'

'Oh, he died, sir, a week after I left.' The lad's voice dropped. Then he added slowly, looking away, 'Tom said he was very quiet—he didn't suffer much—not at the end.'

'Aye, the clouds lift at sunset,' said Mr. Ancrum in an altered tone; 'the air clears before the night!'

His head fell forward on his breast, and he sat drumming on the table. They had finished supper, the little, bustling landlady had cleared away, and Davy was thinking of going. Suddenly the minister sprang up and stood before the fire, looking down at his guest.

'Davy, do you want to know why I didn't write to you? I was ill first—very ill; then—*I was in hell!*'

David started. Into the thin, crooked face, with the seeking eyes, there had flashed an expression—sinister, indescribable, a sort of dumb rage. It changed the man altogether.

'I was in hell!' he repeated slowly. 'I know no more about it. Other people may tell you, perhaps, if you come across them—I can't. There were days at Clough End—always a certain number in the year—when this earth slipped away from me, and the fiends came about me, but this was months. They say I was overdone in the cotton famine years ago just before I came to Clough End. I got pneumonia after I left you that May—it doesn't matter. When I knew there was a sun again, I wrote to ask about you. You had left Kinder and gone—no one knew where.'

David sat nervously silent, not knowing what to say, his mind gradually filling with the sense of something tragic, irreparable. Mr. Ancrum, too, stood straight before him, as though turned to stone.

At last David got up and approached him. Had Ancrum been looking he must have been touched by the change in the lad's expression. The hard self-reliant force of the face had melted into feeling.

'Are you better now, sir? I knew you must have been ill,' he stammered.

Ancrum started as though just wakened.

'Ill? Yes, I was pretty bad,' he said briskly, and in his most ordinary tone, though with a long breath. 'But I'm as fit as anything now. Good night, Davy, good night. Come a walk with me some day? Sunday afternoon? Done. Here, write me your new address.'

The tall form and curly black head disappeared, the little lodging-house room, with its round rosewood table, its horsehair sofa, its chiffonnier, and its prints of 'Sport at Balmoral' and 'The Mother's Kiss,' had resumed the dingy formality of every day.

The minister sank into his seat and held his hands out over the blaze. He was in pain. All life was to him more or less a struggle with physical ill. But it was not so primarily that he conceived it. The physical ill was nothing except as representing a philosophical necessity.

That lad, with all his raw certainties—of himself, his knowledge, his Voltaire—the poor minister felt once or twice a piteous envy of him, as he sat on through the night hours. Life was ill-apportioned. The poor, the lonely, the feeble—it is they who want certainty, want hope most. And because they are lonely and feeble, because their brain tissues are diseased, and their life from no fault of their own unnatural, nature who has made them dooms them to despair and doubt. Is there any 'soul,' any 'personality' for the man who is afflicted and weakened with intermittent melancholia? Where is his identity, where his responsibility? And if there is none for him, how does the accident of health bestow them on his neighbour?

Questions of this sort had beset Richard Ancrum for years. On the little book-table to his right lay papers of Huxley's, of Clifford's, and several worn volumes of mental pathology. The brooding intellect was for ever raising the same problem, the same spectre world of universal doubt, in which God, conscience, faith, were words without a meaning.

But side by side with the restlessness of the intellect there had always gone the imperious and prevailing claim of temperament. Beside Huxley and Clifford, lay Newman's 'Sermons' and 'Apologia,' and a little High Church manual of self-examination. And on the wall above the book-table hung a memorandum-slate on which were a number of addresses and dates—the addresses of some forty boys whom the minister taught on Sunday in one of the Unitarian Sunday schools of Manchester, and visited in the week. The care and training of street arabs had been his

passion when he was still a student at Manchester New College. Then had come his moment of utterance—a thirst for preaching, for religious influence; though he could not bring himself to accept any particular shibboleth or take any kind of orders. He found something congenial for a time to a deep though struggling faith in the leadership of the Christian Brethren. Now, however, something had broken in him; he could preach no more. But he could go back to his old school; he could teach his boys on Sundays and week days; he could take them out country walks in spite of his lame limb; he could deny himself even the commonest necessaries of life for their sake; he could watch over each of them with a fervour, a moral intensity which wore him out. In this, in some insignificant journalism for a religious paper, and in thinking, he spent his life.

There had been a dark page in his history. He had hardly left Manchester New College when he married suddenly a girl of some beauty, but with an undeveloped sensuous temperament. They were to live on a crust and give themselves to the service of man. His own dream was still fresh when she deserted him in the company of one of his oldest friends. He followed them, found them both in black depths of remorse, and took her back. But the strain of living together proved too much. She implored him to let her go and earn her living apart. She had been a teacher, and she proposed to return to her profession. He saw her established in Glasgow in the house of some good people who knew her history, and who got her a post in a small school. Then he returned to Manchester and threw himself with reckless ardour into the work of feeding the hungry, and nursing the dying, in the cotton famine. He emerged a broken man, physically and morally, liable thenceforward to recurrent crises of melancholia; but they were not frequent or severe enough to prevent his working. He was at the time entirely preoccupied with certain religious questions, and thankfully accepted the call to the little congregation at Clough End.

Since then he had visited his wife twice every year. He was extremely poor. His family, who had destined him for the Presbyterian ministry, were estranged from him; hardly anyone in Manchester knew him intimately; only in one house, far away in the Scotch lowlands, were there two people, who deeply loved and thoroughly understood him. There he went when his dark hours came upon him; and thence, after the terrible illness which overtook him on his leaving Clough End, he emerged again, shattered but indomitable, to take up the battle of life as he understood it.

He was not an able nor a literary man. His mind was a strange medley, and his mental sight far from clear. Of late the study of Newman had been a revelation to him. But he did not cease for that to read the books of scientific psychology which tortured him—the books which seemed to make of mind a function of matter, and man the slave of an immoral nature.

The only persistent and original gift in him—yet after all it is the gift which for ever divides the sheep from the goats—was that of a 'hunger and thirst after righteousness.'

CHAPTER IV

It was towards noon on a November day, and Dora Lomax sat working at her embroidery frame in the little sitting-room overlooking Market Place. The pale wintry sun touched her bent head, her deftly moving hand, and that device of the risen Christ circled in golden flame on which she was at work. The room in which she sat was old and low; the ceiling bulged here and there, the floor had unexpected slopes and declivities. The furniture was of the cheapest, the commonest odds and ends of a broker's shop, for the most part. There was the usual horsehair suite, the usual cheap sideboard, and dingy druggeting of a large geometrical pattern. But amid these uninviting articles there were a few things which gave the room individuality—some old prints of places abroad, of different shapes and sizes, which partly disguised the blue and chocolate paper on the walls; some bits of foreign carving, Swiss and Italian; some eggs and shells and stuffed birds, some of these last from the Vosges, some from the Alps; a cageful of canaries, singing their best against the noise of Manchester; and, lastly, an old bookcase full of miscellaneous volumes, mostly large and worthless 'sets' of old magazines and encyclopædias, which represented the relics of Daddy's bookselling days.

The room smelt strongly of cooking, a mingled odour of boiling greens and frying onions and stored apples which never deserted it, and produced a constant slight sense of nausea in Dora, who, like most persons of sedentary occupation, was in matters of eating and digestion somewhat sensitive and delicate. From below, too, there seemed to spread upwards a general sense of bustle and disquiet. Doors banged, knives and plates rattled perpetually, the great swing-door into the street was for ever opening and shutting, each time shaking the old, frail house with its roughly built additions through and through, and there was a distant skurry of voices that never paused. The restaurant indeed was in full work, and Daddy's voice could be heard at intervals, shouting and chattering. Dora had been at work since half-past seven, marketing, giving orders, making up accounts, writing bills of fare, and otherwise organising the work of the day. Now she had left the work for an hour or two to her father and the stout Lancashire cook with her various handmaidens. Daddy's irritable pride liked to get her out of the way and make a lady of her as much as she would allow, and in her secret heart she often felt that her embroidery, for which she was well paid as a skilled and inventive hand, furnished a securer basis for their lives than this restaurant, which, in spite of its apparent success,

was a frequent source of dread and discomfort to her. The money obligation it involved filled her sometimes with a kind of panic. She knew her father so well!

Now, as she sat absorbed in her work, sewing her heart into it, for every stitch in it delighted not only her skilled artistic sense but her religious feeling, little waves of anxious thought swept across her one after another. She was a person of timid and brooding temperament, and her father's eccentricities and past history provided her with much just cause for worry. But to-day she was not thinking much of him.

Again and again there came between her and her silks a face, a face of careless pride and power, framed in strong waves of black hair. It had once repelled her quite as much as it attracted her. But at any rate, ever since she had first seen it, it had taken a place apart in her mind, as though in the yielding stuff of memory and feeling one impression out of the thousands of every day had, without warning, yet irrevocably, stamped itself deeper than the rest. The owner of it—David Grieve—filled her now, as always, with invincible antagonisms and dissents. But still the thought of him had in some gradual way become of late part of her habitual consciousness, associated always, and on the whole painfully associated, with the thought of Lucy Purcell.

For Lucy was such a little goose! To think of the way in which she had behaved towards young Grieve in the fortnight succeeding his notice to quit, before he finally left Purcell's service, made Dora hot all over. How could Lucy demean herself so? and show such tempers and airs towards a man who clearly did not think anything at all about her? And now she had flung herself upon Dora, imploring her cousin to help her, and threatening desperate things unless she and David were still enabled to meet. And meanwhile Purcell had flatly forbidden any communication between his household and the young reprobate he had turned out, whose threatened prosperity made at this moment the angry preoccupation of his life.

What was Dora to do? Was she to aid and abet Lucy, against her father's will, in pursuing David Grieve? And if in spite of all appearances the little self-willed creature succeeded, and Dora were the means of her marrying David, how would Dora's conscience stand? Here was a young man who believed in nothing, and openly said so, who took part in those terrible atheistical meetings and discussions, which, as Father Russell had solemnly said, were like a plague-centre in Manchester, drawing in and corrupting soul after soul. And Dora was to help in throwing her young cousin, while she was still almost a child with no 'Church principles' to aid and protect her, into the hands of this enemy of the Lord and His Church?

Then, when it came to this point, Dora would be troubled and drawn away by memories of young Grieve's talk and ways, of his dashes into Market Place to see Daddy since he had set up for himself, of his bold plans for the future which delighted Daddy

and took her breath away; of the flash of his black eyes; the triumphant energy of his youth; and those indications in him, too, which had so startled her of late since they—she and he—had dropped the futile sparrings in which their acquaintance began, of an inner softness, a sensitive magnetic something—indescribable.

Dora's needle paused in mid-air. Then her hand dropped on her lap. A slight but charming smile—born of youth, sympathy, involuntary admiration—dawned on her face. She sat so for a minute or two lost in reminiscence.

The clock outside struck twelve. Dora with a start felt along the edge of her frame under her work and brought out a book. It was a little black, worn manual of prayers for various times and occasions compiled by a High Church dignitary. For Dora it had a talismanic virtue. She turned now to one of the 'Prayers for Noonday,' made the sign of the cross, and slipped on to her knees for an instant. Then she rose happily and went back to her work. It was such acts as this that made the thread on which her life of mystical emotion was strung.

But her father was a Secularist of a pronounced type, and her mother had been a rigid Baptist, old-fashioned and sincere, filled with a genuine horror of Papistry and all its ways.

Adrian O'Connor Lomax, to give Daddy his whole magnificent name, was the son of a reed-maker, of Irish extraction, at Hyde, and was brought up at first to follow his father's trade—that of making the wire 'reed,' or frame, into which the threads of the warp are fastened before weaving. But such patient drudgery, often continued, as it was in those days, for twelve and fourteen hours out of the twenty-four, was gall and wormwood to a temperament like Daddy's. He developed a taste for reading, fell in with Byron's poems, and caught the fever of them; then branched out into politics just at the time of the first Reform Bill, when all over Lancashire the memory of Peterloo was still burning, and when men like Henry Hunt and Samuel Bamford were the political heroes of every weaver's cottage. He developed a taste for itinerant lecturing and preaching, and presently left his family and tramped to Manchester.

Here after many vicissitudes—including an enthusiastic and on the whole creditable participation, as an itinerant lecturer, in the movement for the founding of Mechanics' Institutes, then spreading all over the north—Daddy, to his ill-fortune, came across his future brother-in-law, the bookseller Purcell. At the moment Daddy was in a new and unaccustomed phase of piety. After a period of revolutionary spouting, in which Byron, Tom Paine, and the various publications of Richard Carlile had formed his chief scriptures, a certain Baptist preacher laid hold of the Irishman's mercurial sense. Daddy was awakened and converted, burnt his Byron and his Tom Paine in his three-pair back with every circumstance of insult and contumely, and looked about for

an employer worthy of one of the elect. Purcell at the time had a shop in one of the main streets connecting Manchester and Salford; he was already an elder at the chapel Daddy frequented; the two made acquaintance and Lomax became Purcell's assistant. At the moment the trade offered to him attracted Daddy vastly. He had considerable pretensions to literature; was a Shakespearian, a debater, and a haunter of a certain literary symposium, held for a long time at one of the old Manchester inns, and attended by most of the small wits and poets of a then small and homely town. The gathering had nothing saintly about it; free drinking went often hand in hand with free thought; Daddy's infant zeal was shocked, but Daddy's instincts were invincible, and he went.

The result of the bookselling experiment has been already told by Daddy himself. It was, of course, inevitable. Purcell was then a young man, but in his dealings with Daddy he showed precisely the same cast-iron self-importance, the same slowness of brain coupled with the same assumptions of an unbounded and righteous authority, the same unregenerate greediness in small matters of gain and loss which now in his later life had made him odious to David Grieve. Moreover, Daddy, by a happy instinct, had at once made common cause with Purcell's downtrodden sister, going on even, as his passionate sense of opposition developed, to make love to the poor humble thing mainly for the sake of annoying the brother. The crisis came; the irritated tyrant brought down a heavy hand, and Daddy and Isabella disappeared together from the establishment in Chapel Street.

By the time Daddy had set up as the husband of Purcell's sister in a little shop precisely opposite to that of his former employer, he had again thrown over all pretensions to sanctity, was, on the contrary, convinced afresh that all religion was one vast perennial imposture, dominated, we may suppose, in this as in most other matters, by the demon of hatred which now possessed him towards his brother-in-law. His wife, poor soul, was beginning to feel herself tied for good to the tail of a comet destined to some mad career or other, and quite uncontrollable by any efforts of hers. Lomax had married her for the most unpromising reasons in the world, and he soon tired of her, and of the trade, which required a sustained effort, which he was incapable of giving. As long as Purcell remained opposite, indeed, hate and rivalry kept him up to the mark. He was an attractive figure at that time, with his long fair hair and his glancing greenish eyes; and his queer discursive talk attracted many a customer, whom he would have been quite competent to keep had his character been of the same profitable stuff as his ability.

But when Purcell vanished across the river into Manchester, the zest of Daddy's bookselling enterprise departed also. He began to neglect his shop, was off here and there lecturing and debating, and when he came back again it was plain to the wife that their scanty money had been squandered on other excesses

than those of talk. At last the business fell to ruins, and debts pressed. Then suddenly Daddy was persuaded by a French commercial traveller to take up his old trade of reed-making, and go and seek employment across the Channel, where reed-makers were said to be in demand.

In ecstasy at the idea of travel thus presented to him, Daddy devoured what books about France he could get hold of, and tried to teach himself French. Then one morning, without a word to his wife, he stole downstairs and out of the shop, and was far on the road to London before his flight was discovered. His poor wife shed some tears, but he had ceased to care for her she believed, largely because she had brought him no children, and his habits had begun to threaten to lead her with unpleasant rapidity to the workhouse. So she took comfort, and with the help of some friends set up a little stationery and fancy business, which just kept her alive.

Meanwhile Lomax found no work in Picardy, whither he had first gone, and ultimately wandered across France to Alsace, in search of bread, a prey to all possible hardships and privations. But nothing daunted him. The glow of adventure and romance was on every landscape. Cathedrals, forests, the wide river-plains of central France, with their lights and distances,—all things on this new earth and under these new heavens 'haunted him like a passion.' He travelled in perpetual delight, making love no doubt here and there to some passing Mignon, and starving with the gayest of hearts.

At Mulhausen he found work, and being ill and utterly destitute, submitted to it for a while. But as soon as he had got back his health and saved some money, he set out again, walking this time, staff in hand, over the whole Rhine country and into the Netherlands. There in the low Dutch plains he fell ill again, and the beauty of the Rhineland was no longer there to stand like a spell between him and the pains of poverty. He seemed to come to himself, after a dream in which the world and all its forms had passed him by 'apparelled in celestial light.' And the process of self-finding was attended by some at least of those salutary pangs which eternally belong to it. He suddenly took a resolution, crept on board a coal smack going from a Dutch port to Grimsby, toiled across Lincolnshire and Yorkshire, and appeared one evening, worn to a shadow, in his wife's little shop in Salford.

He was received as foolish women in whom there is no ineradicable taint of cruelty or hate will always receive the prodigal who returns. And when Daddy had been fed and clothed, he turned out for a time to be so amiable, so grateful a Daddy, such good company, as he sat in the chair by his wife's fire and told stories of his travels to her and anybody else who might drop in, that not only the wife but the neighbourhood was appeased. His old friends came back to him, he began to receive overtures to write in some of the humbler papers, to lecture on his adventures in the

Yorkshire and Lancashire towns. Daddy expanded, harangued, grew daily in good looks and charm under his wife's eyes.

At last one day the papers came in with news of Louis Philippe's overthrow. Daddy grew restless, and began to study the foreign news with avidity. Revolution spread, and what with democracy abroad and Chartism at home, there was more stimulus in the air than such brains as Daddy's could rightly stand. One May day he walked into the street, looked hesitatingly up and down it, shading his eyes against the sun. Then with a shake of his long hair, as of one throwing off a weight, he drew his hat from under his arm, put it on, felt in his pockets, and set off at a run, head downwards, while poor Isabella Lomax was sweeping her kitchen. During the next few days he was heard of, rumour said, now here, now there, but one might as well have attempted to catch and hold the Pied Piper.

He was away for rather more than twenty months. Then one day, as before, a lean, emaciated, sun-browned figure came slowly up the Salford street, looking for a familiar door. It was Daddy. He went into the shop, which was empty, stared, with a countenance in which relief and repulsion were oddly mingled, at the boxes of stationery, at the dusty counter with its string and glass cases, when suddenly the inside door, which was standing ajar, was pushed stealthily inwards, and a child stood in the doorway. It was a tottering baby of a year old, holding in one fat hand a crust of bread which it had been sucking. When it saw the stranger it looked at him gravely for a second. Then without a trace of fear or shyness it came forward, holding up its crust appealingly, its rosy chin and lips still covered with bread-crumbs.

Daddy stared at the apparition, which seemed to him the merest witchcraft. For it was *himself*, dwarfed to babyhood and pinafores. His eyes, his prominent brow, his colour; his trick of holding the head—they were all there, absurdly there.

He gave a cry, which was answered by another cry from behind. His wife stood in the door. The stout, foolish Isabella was white to the lips. Even she felt the awe, the poetry of the moment.

'Aye,' she said, trembling. 'Aye! it's yourn. It was born seven months after yo left us.'

Daddy, without greeting his wife, threw himself down by the babe, and burst into tears. He had come back in a still darker mood than on his first return, his egotistical belief in himself more rudely shaken than ever by the attempts, the failures, the miseries of the last eighteen months. For one illuminating moment he saw that he was a poor fool, and that his youth was squandered and gone. But in its stead, there—dropped suddenly beside him by the forgiving gods—stood this new youth sprung from his, and all his own, this child—Dora.

He took to her with a passion which the trembling Isabella thought a great deal too excessive to last. But though the natural Daddy very soon reappeared, with all the aggravating

peculiarities which belonged to him, the passion did last, and the truant strayed no more. He set up a small printing business with the help of some old customers—it was always characteristic of the man that, be his failings what they might, he never lacked friends—and with lecturing and writing, and Isabella's shop, they struggled on somehow. Isabella's life was hard enough. Daddy was only good when he was happy; and at other times he dipped recklessly into vices which would have been the ruin of them all had they been persistent. But by some kind fate he always emerged, and more and more, as years went on, owing to Dora. He drank, but not hopelessly; he gambled, but not past salvation; and there was generally, as we have said, some friend at hand to pick the poor besmirched featherbrain out of the mire.

Dora grew up not unhappily. There were shifts and privations to put up with; there were stormy days when life seemed a hurricane of words and tears. But there were bright spaces in between, when Daddy had good resolutions, or a little more money than usual; and with every year the daughter instinctively knew that her spell over her father strengthened. She was on the whole a serious child, with fair pale hair, much given to straying in long loose ends about her prominent brow and round cheeks. Yet at the Baptist school, whither she was sent, she was certainly popular. She had a passion for the little ones; and her grey-blue eyes, over which in general the fringed lids drooped too much, had a charming trick of sudden smiles, when the soft soul behind looked for an instant clearly and blithely out. At home she was a little round-shouldered drudge in her mother's service. At chapel she sat very patiently and happily under a droning minister, and when the inert and despondent Isabella would have let most of her religious duties drop, in the face of many troubles and a scoffing husband, the child of fourteen gently and persistently held her to them.

At last, however, when Dora was seventeen, Isabella died of cancer, and Daddy, who had been much shaken and terrified by her sufferings in her last illness, fell for a while into an irritable melancholy, from which not even Dora could divert him. It was then that he seemed for the first time to cross the line which had hitherto divided him from ruin. The drinking at the White Horse, where the literary circle met of which Lomax had been so long an ornament, had been of late going from bad to worse. The households of the wits concerned were up in arms; neighbourhood and police began to assert themselves. One night the trembling Dora waited hour after hour for her father. About midnight he staggered in, maddened with drink and fresh from a skirmish with the police. Finding her there waiting for him, pale and silent, he did what he had never done before under any stress of trouble—struck and swore at her. Dora sank down with a groan, and in another minute Lomax was dashing his head against the wall, vowing that he would beat his brains out. In the hours that followed, Dora's young soul was stretched as it

were on a rack, from which it rose, not weakened, but with new powers and a loftier stature. All her girlish levities and illusions seemed to drop away from her. She saw her mission, and took her squalid Œdipus in charge.

Next morning she went to some of her father's friends, unknown to Daddy, and came back with a light in her blanched face, bearing the offer of some work on a Radical paper at Leicester. Daddy, now broken and miserable, submitted, and off they went.

At Leicester the change of moral and physical climate produced for a while a wonderful effect. Daddy found himself marvellously at ease among the Secularist and Radical stockingers of the town, and soon became well known to them as a being half butt, half oracle. Dora set herself to learn dressmaking, and did her best to like the new place and the new people. It was at Leicester, a place seething with social experiment in its small provincial way, with secularism, Owenism, anti-vaccination, and much else, that Lomax fell a victim to one 'ism the more—to vegetarianism. It was there that, during an editorial absence, and in the first fervour of conversion, Daddy so belaboured a carnivorous world in the columns of the 'Penny Banner' for which he worked, and so grotesquely and persistently reduced all the problems of the time to terms of nitrogen and albumen, that curt dismissal came upon him, and for a time Dora saw nothing but her precarious earnings between them and starvation. It was then also that, by virtue of that queer charm he could always exercise when he pleased, he laid hold on a young Radical manufacturer and got out of him a loan of 200*l.* for the establishment of a vegetarian restaurant wherein Leicester was to be taught how to feed.

But Leicester, alas ! remained unregenerate. In the midst of Daddy's preparations a commercial traveller, well known both to Manchester and Leicester, repeated to him one day a remark of Purcell's, to the effect that since Daddy's migration Manchester had been well rid of a vagabond, and he, Purcell, of a family disgrace. Daddy, bursting with fatuous rage, and possessed besides of the wildest dreams of fortune on the strength of his 200*l.*, straightway made up his mind to return to Manchester, 'pull Purcell's nose,' and plant himself and his prosperity that was to be in the bookseller's eyes. He broke in upon Dora at her work, and poured into her astonished ears a stream of talk, marked by a mad inventiveness, partly in the matter of vegetarian receipts, still more in that of Purcell's future discomforts. When Daddy was once launched into a subject that suited him, he was inexhaustible. His phrases flowed for ever ; of words he was always sure. Like a certain French talker, 'his sentences were like cats ; he showered them into air and they found their feet without trouble.'

Dora sat through it, bewildered and miserable. Go back to Manchester where they had been so unhappy, where the White

Horse and its crew were waiting for her father, simply to get into debt and incur final ruin for the sake of a mad fancy she humoured but could not believe in, and a still madder thirst for personal vengeance on a man who was more than a match for anything Daddy could do ! She was in despair.

But Daddy was obdurate, brutal in his determination to have his way ; and when she angered him with her remonstrances, he turned upon her with an irritable—

'I know what it is—damn it ! It's that Puseyite gang you've taken up with—you think of nothing but them. As if you couldn't find antics and petticoats and priests in Manchester—they're everywhere—like weeds. Wherever there's a dunghill of human credulity they swarm.'

Dora looked proudly at her father, as though disdaining to reply, gentle creature that she was ; then she bent again over her work, and a couple of tears fell on the seam she was sewing.

Aye, it was true enough. In leaving Leicester, after these two years, she was leaving what to her had been a spiritual birthplace,—tearing asunder a new and tender growth of the soul.

This was how it had come about.

On her first arrival in Leicester, in a *milieu*, that is to say, where at the time 'Gavroche,' as M. Renan calls him—the street philosopher who is no less certain and no more rational than the street preacher—reigned supreme, where her Secularist father and his associates, hot-headed and early representatives of a phase of thought which has since then found much abler, though hardly less virulent, expression in such a paper, say, as the 'National Reformer,' were for ever rending and trampling on all the current religious images and ideas, Dora shrank into herself more and more. She had always been a Baptist because her mother was. But in her deep reaction against her father's associates, the chapel which she frequented did not now satisfy her. She hungered for she knew not what, certain fastidious artistic instincts awakening the while in unexpected ways.

Then one Easter Eve, as she came back from an errand into the outskirts of the town, she passed a little iron church standing in a very poor neighbourhood, where, as she knew, a 'Puseyite' curate in charge officiated, and where a good many disturbances which had excited the populace had taken place. She went in. The curate, a long, gaunt figure, of a familiar monkish type, was conducting 'vespers' for the benefit of some twenty hearers, mostly women in black. The little church was half decorated for Easter, though the altar had still its Lenten bareness. Something in the ordering of the place, in its colours, its scents, in the voice of the priest, in the short address he delivered after the service, dwelling in a tone of intimate emotion, the tone of the pastor to the souls he guides and knows, on the preparation needful for the Easter Eucharist, struck home to Dora. Next day she was present at the Easter festival. Never had religion spoken so touchingly to her before as through these hymns, these flowers,

this incense, this Eucharistic ceremonial wherein—being the midday celebration—the congregation were merely hushed spectators of the most pathetic and impressive act in the religious symbolism of mankind. In the dark corner where she had hidden herself, Dora felt the throes of some new birth within her. In six weeks from that time she had been admitted, after instruction, to the Anglican communion.

Thenceforward another existence began for this child of English Dissent, in whom, however, some old Celtic leaven seems to have always kept up a vague unrest, till the way of mystery and poetry was found.

Daddy—the infidel Daddy—stormed a good deal, and lamented himself still more, when these facts became known to him. Dora had become a superstitious, priest-ridden dolt, of no good to him or anyone else any more. What, indeed, was to become of him? Natural affection cannot stand against the priest. A daughter cannot love her father and go to confession. Down with the abomination—*écrasez l'infâme!*

Dora smiled sadly and went her way. Against her sweet silent tenacity Daddy measured himself in vain. She would be a good daughter to him, but she would be a good churchwoman first. He began to perceive in her that germ of detachment from things earthly and human which all ceremonialism produces, and in a sudden terror gave way and opposed her no more. Afterwards, in a curious way, he came even to relish the change in her. The friends it brought her, the dainty ordering of the little flower-decked oratory she made for herself in one corner of her bare attic room, the sweet sobriety and refinement which her new loves and aspirations and self-denials brought with them into the house, touched the poetical instincts which were always dormant in the queer old fellow, and besides flattered some strong and secret ambitions which he cherished for his daughter. It appeared to him to have raised her socially, to have made a lady of her—this joining the Church. Well, the women must have some religious bag or other to run their heads into, and the Church bag perhaps was the most seemly.

On the day of their return to Manchester, Daddy, sitting with crossed arms and legs in a corner of the railway carriage, might have sat for a fairy-book illustration of Rumpelstiltzchen. His old peaked hat, which he had himself brought from the Tyrol, fell forward over his frowning brow, his cloak was caught fiercely about him, and, as the quickly-passing mill-towns began to give notice of Manchester as soon as the Derbyshire vales were left behind, his glittering eyes disclosed an inward fever—a fever of contrivance and of hate. He was determined to succeed, and equally determined to make his success Purcell's annoyance.

Dora sat opposite, with her bird-cage on her knee, looking sad and weary. She had left behind, perhaps for ever, the dear

friends who had opened to her the way of holiness, and guided her first steps. Her eyes filled with tears of gratitude and emotion as she thought of them.

Two things only were pleasant to remember. One was that the Church embroidery she had begun in her young zeal at Leicester, using her odds and ends of time, to supplement the needs of a struggling church depending entirely on voluntary contributions, was now probably to become her trade. For she had shown remarkable aptitude for it; and she carried introductions to a large church-furniture shop in Manchester which would almost certainly employ her.

The other was the fact that somewhere in Manchester she had a girl-cousin—Lucy Purcell—who must be about sixteen. Purcell had married after his migration to Half Street; his wife proved to be delicate and died in a few years; this little girl was all that was left to him. Dora had only seen her once or twice in her life. The enmity between Lomax and Purcell of course kept the families apart, and, after her mother's early death, Purcell sent his daughter to a boarding-school and so washed his hands of the trouble of her bringing up. But in spite of these barriers Dora well remembered a slim, long-armed schoolgirl, much dressed and becurled, who once in a by-street of Salford had run after her and, looking round carefully to see that no one was near, had thrust an eager face into hers and kissed her suddenly. 'Dora,—is your mother better? I wish I could come and see you. Oh, it's horrid of people to quarrel! But I mustn't stay,—some one 'll see, and I should just catch it! Good-bye, Dora!' and so another kiss, very hasty and frightened, but very welcome to the cheek it touched.

As they neared Manchester, Dora, in her loneliness of soul, thought very tenderly of Lucy—wondered how she had grown up, whether she was pretty and many other things. She had certainly been a pretty child. Of course they must know each other and be friends. Dora could not let her father's feud come between her and her only relation. Purcell might keep them apart; but she would show him she meant no harm; and she would bring her father round—she would and must.

Two years had gone by. Of Daddy's two objects in leaving Leicester, one had so far succeeded better than any rational being would have foreseen.

On the first morning after their arrival he went out, giving Dora the slip lest she might cramp him inconveniently in his decision; and came back radiant, having taken a deserted seed-shop in Market Place, which had a long, irregular addition at the back, formerly a warehouse, providentially suited, so Daddy declared, to the purposes of a restaurant. The rent he had promised to give seemed to Dora a crime, considering their resources. The thought of it, the terror of the servants he was engaging, the knowledge of the ridicule and blame with which

their old friends regarded her father's proceedings, these things kept the girl awake night after night.

But he would hear no remonstrances, putting all she had to say aside with an arrogant boastfulness, which never failed.

In they went. Dora set her teeth and did her best, keeping as jealous a watch on the purse-strings as she could, and furnishing their three rooms above the shop for as few shillings as might be, while Daddy was painting and decorating, composing *menus*, and ransacking recipes with the fever of an artist, now writing letters to the Manchester papers, or lecturing to audiences in the Mechanics' Institute and the different working men's clubs, and now plastering the shop-front with grotesque labels, or posing at his own doorway and buttonholing the passers-by in the Tyrolese brigand's costume which was his favourite garb.

The thing took. There is a certain mixture of prophet and mountebank which can be generally counted upon to hit the popular fancy, and Daddy attained to it. Moreover, the moment was favourable. After the terrible strain of the cotton-famine and the horrors of the cholera, Manchester was prosperous again. Trade was brisk, and the passage of the new Reform Bill had given a fresh outlet and impulse to the artisan mind which did but answer to the social and intellectual advance made by the working classes since '32. The huge town was growing fast, was seething with life, with ambitions, with all the passions and ingenuities that belong to gain and money-making and the race for success. It was pre-eminently a city of young men of all nationalities, three-fourths constantly engaged in the *chasse* for money, according to their degrees—here for shillings, there for sovereigns, there for thousands. In such a *milieu* any man has a chance who offers to deal afresh on new terms with those daily needs which both goad and fetter the struggling multitude at every step. Vegetarianism had, in fact, been spreading in Manchester ; one or two prominent workmen's papers were preaching it ; and just before Daddy's advent there had been a great dinner in a public hall, where the speedy advent of a regenerate and frugivorous mankind, with length of days in its right hand, and a captivating abundance of small moneys in its waistcoat pocket, had been freely and ardently prophesied.

So Daddy for once seized the moment, and succeeded like the veriest Philistine. On the opening day the restaurant was crowded from morning till night. Dora, with her two cooks in the suffocating kitchen behind, had to send out the pair of panting, perspiring kitchen-boys again and again for fresh supplies ; while Daddy, at his wits' end for waiters, after haranguing a group of customers on the philosophy of living, amid a tumult of mock cheers and laughter, would rush in exasperated to Dora, to say that *never* again would he trust her niggardly ways—she would be the ruin of him with her economies.

When at night the doors were shut at last on the noise and the crowd, and Daddy sat, with his full cash-box open on his knee,

while the solitary gaslight that remained threw a fantastic and colossal shadow of him over the rough floor of the restaurant, Dora came up to him dropping with fatigue. He looked at her, his gaunt face working, and burst into tears.

'Dora, we never had any money before, not when—when—your mother was alive.'

And she knew that by a strange reaction there had come suddenly upon him the memory of those ghastly months when she and he through the long hours of every day had been forced —baffled and helpless—to watch her mother's torture, and when the sordid struggle for daily bread was at its worst, robbing death of all its dignity, and pity of all its power to help.

Do what she would, she could hardly get him to give up the money and go to bed. He was utterly unstrung, and his triumph for the moment lay bitter in the mouth.

It was now two years since that opening day. During that time the Parlour had become a centre after its sort—a scandal to some and a delight to others. The native youth got his porridge, and apple pie, and baked potato there ; but the place was also largely haunted by the foreign clerks of Manchester. There was, for instance, a company of young Frenchmen who lunched there habitually, and in whose society the delighted Daddy caught echoes from that unprejudiced life of Paris or Lyons, which had amazed and enlightened his youth. The place assumed a stamp and character. To Daddy the development of his own popularity, which was like the emergence of a new gift, soon became a passion. He deliberately 'ran' his own eccentricities as part of the business. Hence his dress, his menus, his advertisements, and all the various antics which half regaled, half scandalised the neighbourhood. Dora marvelled and winced, and by dint of an habitual tolerance retained the power of stopping some occasional enormity.

As to finances, they were not making their fortune ; far from it ; but to Dora's amazement, considering her own inexperience and her father's flightiness, they had paid their way and something more. She was no born woman of business, as any professional accountant examining her books might have discovered. But she had a passionate determination to defraud no one, and somehow, through much toil her conscience did the work. Meanwhile every month it astonished her freshly that they two should be succeeding ! Success was so little in the tradition of their tattered and variegated lives. Could it last ? At the bottom of her mind lay a constant presentiment of new change, founded no doubt on her knowledge of her father.

But outwardly there was little to justify it. The craving for drink seemed to have left him altogether—a not uncommon effect of this particular change of diet. And his hatred of Purcell, though in itself it had proved quite unmanageable by all her arts, had done nobody much harm. In a society dependent on law

and police there are difficulties in the way of a man's dealing primitively with his enemy. There had been one or two awkward meetings between the two in the open street; and at the Parlour, among his special intimates, Daddy had elaborated a Purcell myth of a Pecksniffian character which his invention perpetually enriched. On the whole, however, it was in his liking for young Grieve, originally a casual customer at the restaurant, that Dora saw the chief effects of the feud. He had taken the lad up eagerly as soon as he had discovered both his connection with Purcell and his daring rebellious temper; had backed him up in all his quarrels with his master; had taken him to the Hall of Science, and introduced him to the speakers there; and had generally paraded him as a secularist convert, snatched from the very jaws of the Baptist.

And now!—now that David was in open opposition, attracting Purcell's customers, taking Purcell's water, Daddy was in a tumult of delight: wheeling off old books of his own, such as 'The Journal of Theology' and the 'British Controversialist,' to fill up David's stall, running down whenever business was slack to see how the lad was getting on; and meanwhile advertising him with his usual extravagance among the frequenters of the Parlour.

All through, however, or rather since Miss Purcell had returned from school, Dora and her little cousin Lucy had been allowed to meet. Lomax saw his daughter depart on her visits to Half Street, in silence; Purcell, when he first recognised her, hardly spoke to her. Dora believed, what was in fact the truth, that each regarded her as a means of keeping an eye on the other. She conveyed information from the hostile camp—therefore she was let alone.

CHAPTER V

'Why—Lucy!'

Dora was still bending over her work when a well-known tap at the door startled her meditations.

Lucy put her head in, and, finding Dora alone, came in with a look of relief. Settling herself in a chair opposite Dora, she took off her hat, smoothed the coils of hair to which it had been pinned, unbuttoned the smart little jacket of pilot cloth, and threw back the silk handkerchief inside; and all with a feverish haste and irritation as though everything she touched vexed her.

'What's the matter, Lucy?' said Dora, after a little pause. At the moment of Lucy's entrance she had been absorbed in a measurement.

'Nothing!' said Lucy quickly. 'Dora, you've got your hair loose!'

Dora put up her hand patiently. She was accustomed to be put to rights. It was characteristic at once of her dreaminess and her powers of self-discipline that she was fairly orderly, though

she had great difficulty in being so. Without a constant struggle, she would have had loose plaits and hanging strings about her always. Lucy's trimness was a perpetual marvel to her. It was like the contrast between the soft indeterminate lines of her charming face and Lucy's small, sharply cut features.

Lucy, still restless, began tormenting the feather in her hat.

'When are you going to finish that, Dora?' she asked, nodding towards the frame.

'Oh it won't be very long now,' said Dora, putting her head on one side that she might take a general survey, at once loving and critical, of her work.

'You oughtn't to sit so close at it,' said Lucy decidedly; 'you'll spoil your complexion.'

'I've none to spoil.'

'Oh, yes, you have, Dora—that's so silly of you. You aren't sallow a bit. It's pretty to be pale like that. Lots of people say so—not quite so pale as you are sometimes, perhaps—but I know why *that* is,' said Lucy, with a half-malicious emphasis.

A slight pink rose in Dora's cheeks, but she bent over her frame and said nothing.

'Does your clergyman *tell* you to fast in Lent, Dora—who tells you?'

'The Church!' replied Dora, scandalised and looking up with bright eyes. 'I wish you understood things a little more, Lucy.'

'I can't,' said Lucy, with a pettish sigh, 'and I don't care twopence!'

She threw herself back in her rickety chair. Her arm dropped over the side, and she lay staring at the ceiling. Dora went on with her work in silence for a minute, and then looked up to see a tear dropping from Lucy's cheek on to the horsehair covering of the chair.

'Lucy, what *is* the matter?—I knew there was something wrong!'

Lucy sat up and groped energetically for her handkerchief.

'You wouldn't care,' she said, her lips quivering—'nobody cares!'

And, sinking down again, she hid her face and fairly burst out sobbing. Dora, in alarm, pushed aside her frame and tried to caress and console her. But Lucy held her off, and in a second or two was angrily drying her eyes.

'Oh, you can't do any good, Dora—not the least good. It's father—you know well enough what it is—I shall never get on with father if I live to be a hundred!'

'Well, you haven't had long to try in,' said Dora, smiling.

'Quite long enough to know,' replied Lucy, drearily. 'I know I shall have a horrid life—I must. Nobody can help it. Do you know we've got another shopman, Dora?'

The tone of childish scorn she threw into the question was inimitable. Dora with difficulty kept from laughing.

'Well, what's he like?'

'*Like?* He's like—like nothing,' said Lucy, whose vocabulary was not extensive. 'He's fat and ugly—wears spectacles. Father says he's a treasure—to me—and then when they're in the shop I hear him going on at him like anything for being a stupid. And I have to give the creature tea when father's away. He's so shy he always upsets something. Mary Ann and I have to clear up after him as though he were a school-child.—And father gets in a regular passion if I ask him about the dance—and there's a missionary tea next week, and he's made me take a table—and he wants me to teach in Sunday School—and the minister's wife has been talking to him about my dress—and—and—No, I *can't* stand it, Dora—I can't and I won't!'

And Lucy, gulping down fresh tears, sat intensely upright, and looked frowningly at Dora as though defying her to take the matter lightly.

Dora was perplexed. Deep in her dove-like soul lay the fiercest views about Dissent—that rent in the seamless vesture of Christ, as she had learnt to consider it. Her mother had been a Baptist till her death, she herself till she was grown up. But now she had all the zeal—nay, even the rancour—of the convert. It was one of her inmost griefs that her own change had not come earlier—before her mother's death. Then perhaps her mother, her poor—poor—mother, might have changed with her. It went against her to urge Lucy to make herself a good Baptist.

'It's no wonder Uncle Tom wants you to do what he likes,' she said slowly. 'But if you don't take to chapel, Lucy—if you want something different, perhaps—'

'Oh, I don't want any *church*, thank you,' cried Lucy, up in arms. 'I don't want *anybody* ordering me about. Why can't I go my own way a bit, and amuse myself as I please? It is *too*, too bad!'

Dora did not know what more to say. She went on with her work, thinking about it all. Suddenly Lucy astonished her by a question in another voice.

'Have you seen Mr. Grieve's shop, Dora?'

Dora looked up.

'No. Father's been there a good many times. He says it's capital for a beginning and he's sure to get on fast. There's one or two very good sort of customers been coming lately. There's the Earl of Driffield, I think it is—don't you remember, Lucy, it was he gave that lecture with the magic lantern at the Institute you and I went to last summer. He's a queer sort of gentleman. Well, he's been coming several times and giving orders. And there's some of the college gentlemen; oh, and a lot of others. They all seem to think he's so clever, father says—'

'I know the Earl of Driffield quite well,' said Lucy loftily. 'He used to be always coming to our place, and I've tied up his books for him sometimes. I don't see what's the good of being an earl—not to go about like that. And father says he's got a grand

place near Stalybridge too. Well, if *he's* gone to Mr. Grieve, father 'll be just mad.' Lucy pursed up her small mouth with energy. Dora evaded the subject.

'He says when he's quite settled,' she resumed presently, 'we're to go and have supper with him for a house-warming.'

Lucy looked ready to cry again.

'He couldn't ask me—of course he couldn't,' she said, indistinctly. 'Dora—Dora!'

'Well? Oh, don't mix up my silks, Lucy; I shall never get them right again.'

Lucy reluctantly put them down.

'Do you think, Dora, Mr. Grieve cares anything at all about me?' she said at last, hurrying out the words, and looking Dora in the face, very red and bold.

Dora laughed outright.

'I knew you were going to ask that!' she said. 'Perhaps I've been asking myself!'

Lucy said nothing, but the tears dropped again down her cheeks and on to her small quivering hands—all the woman awake in her.

Dora pushed her frame away, and put her arm round her cousin, quite at a loss what to say for the best.

Another woman would have told Lucy plumply that she was a little fool; that in the first place young Grieve had never shown any signs of making love to her at all; and that, in the second, if he had, her father would never let her marry him without a struggle which nobody could suppose Lucy capable of waging with a man like Purcell. It was all a silly fancy, the whim of a green girl, which would make her miserable for nothing. Mrs. Alderman Head, for instance, Dora's chaperon for the Institute dance, the sensible, sharp-tongued wife of a wholesale stationer in Market Street, would certainly have taken this view of the matter, and communicated it to Lucy with no more demur than if you had asked her, say, for her opinion on the proper season for bottling gooseberries. But Dora, whose inmost being was one tremulous surge of feeling and emotion, could not approach any matter of love and marriage without a thrill, without a sense of tragedy almost. Besides, like Lucy, she was very young still—just twenty—and youth answers to youth.

'You know Uncle Tom wouldn't like it a bit, Lucy,' she began in her perplexity.

'I don't care!' cried Lucy, passionately. 'Girls can't marry to please their fathers. I should have to wait, I suppose. I would get my own way somehow. But what's the good of talking about it, Dora? I'm sick of thinking about it—sick of everything. He'll marry somebody else—I know he will—and I shall break my heart, or—'

'Marry somebody else, too,' suggested Dora slyly.

Lucy drew herself angrily away, and had to be soothed into forgiving her cousin. The child had, in fact, thought and worried

herself by now into such a sincere belief in her own passion, that there was nothing for it but to take it seriously. Dora yielded herself to Lucy's tears and her own tenderness. She sat pondering.

Then, suddenly, she said something very different from what Lucy expected her to say.

'Oh! if I could get him to go and talk to Father Russell! He's so wonderful with young men.'

Her hand dropped on to her knee; she looked away from Lucy out of the window, her sweet face one longing.

Lucy was startled, and somewhat annoyed. In her disgust with her father and her anxiety to attract David's notice, she had so entirely forgotten his religious delinquencies, that it seemed fussy and intrusive on Dora's part to make so much of them. She instinctively resented, too, what sounded to her like a tone of proprietary interest. It was not Dora that was his friend—it was she!

'I don't see what you have to do with his opinions, Dora,' she said stiffly; 'he isn't rude to you now as he used to be. Young men are always wild a bit at first.'

And she tossed her head with all the worldly wisdom of seventeen.

Dora sighed and was silent. She fell to her work again, while Lucy wandered restlessly about the room. Presently the child stopped short.

'Oh! look here, Dora—'

'Yes.'

'Do come round with me and look at some spring patterns I've got. You might just as well. I know you've been slaving your eyes out, and it's a nice day.'

Dora hesitated, but finally consented. She had been at work for many hours in hot rooms, and meant to work a good many more yet before night. A break would revive her, and there was ample time before the three o'clock dinner which she and her father took together after the midday rush of the restaurant was over. So she put on her things.

On their way Dora looked into the kitchen. Everything was in full work. A stout, red-faced woman was distributing and superintending. On the long charcoal stove which Daddy under old Barbier's advice had just put up, on the hot plates near, and the glowing range in the background, innumerable pans were simmering and steaming. Here was a table covered with stewed fruits; there another laden with round vegetable pies just out of the oven—while a heap of tomatoes on a third lent their scarlet to the busy picture. Some rays of wintry sun had slipped in through the high windows, and were contending with the steam of the pies and the smoke from the cooking. And in front of all on an upturned box sat a pair of Lancashire lasses, peeling apples at lightning speed, yet not so fast but they could laugh and chat the while, their bright eyes wandering perpetually through

the open serving hatches which ran along one side of the room, to the restaurant stretching beyond, with its rows of well-filled tables and its passing waitresses in their white caps and aprons.

Dora slipped in among them in her soft deprecating way, smiling at this one and that till she came to the stout cook. There she stopped and asked something. Lucy, standing at the door, saw the huge woman draw a corner of her apron across her eyes.

'What did you want, Dora?' she inquired as her cousin rejoined her.

'It's her poor boy. He's in the Infirmary and very bad. I'm sure they think he's dying. I wanted to send her there this morning and do her work, but she wouldn't go. There's no more news—but we mustn't be long.'

She walked on, evidently thinking with a tender absorption of the mother and son, while Lucy was conscious of her usual impatience with all this endless concern for unknown people, which stood so much in the way of Dora's giving her full mind to her cousin's affairs.

Yet, as she knew well, Sarah, the stout cook, had been the chief prop of the Parlour ever since it opened. No other servant had stayed long with Daddy. He was too fantastic and exacting a master. She had stayed—for Dora's sake—and, from bearing with him, had learnt to manage him. When she came she brought with her a sickly, overgrown lad, the only son of her widowhood, to act as kitchen-boy. He did his poor best for a while, his mother in truth getting through most of his work as well as her own, while Dora, who had the weakness for doctoring inherent in all good women, stuffed him with cod-liver oil and 'strengthening mixtures.' Then symptoms of acute hip-disease showed themselves, and the lad was admitted to the big Infirmary in Piccadilly. There he had lain for some six or eight weeks now, toiling no more, fretting no more, living on his mother's and Dora's visits, and quietly loosening one life-tendril after another. During all this time Dora had thought of him, prayed for him, taught him—the wasted, piteous creature.

When they arrived at Half Street, they let themselves in by the side-door, and Lucy hurried her cousin into the parlour that there might be no meeting with her father, with whom she was on decidedly uncomfortable terms.

The table in the parlour was strewn with patterns from several London shops. To send for them, examine them, and imagine what they would look like when made up was now Lucy's chief occupation. To which might be added a little strumming on the piano, a little visiting—not much, for she hated most of her father's friends, and was at present too closely taken up with self-pity and speculations as to what David Grieve might be doing to make new ones—and a great deal of ordering about of Mary Ann.

Dora sat down, and Lucy pounced on one pattern after another, folding them between her fingers and explaining eagerly how this or that would look if it were cut so, or trimmed so.

'Oh, Dora, look—this pink gingham with white spots! Don't you think it's a love? And, you know, pink always suits me, except when it's a blue-pink. But you don't call that a blue-pink, do you? And yet it isn't salmon, certainly—it's something between. It *ought* to suit me, but I declare—' and suddenly, to Dora's dismay, the child flung down the patterns she held with a passionate vehemence—'I declare nothing seems to suit me now! Dora!'—in a tone of despair—'*Dora!* don't you think I'm going off? My complexion's all dull, and—and—why I might be thirty!' and running over to the glass, draped in green cut-paper, which adorned the mantelpiece, Lucy stood before it examining herself in an agony. And, indeed, there was a change. A touch of some withering blight seemed to have swept across the whole dainty face, and taken the dewy freshness from the eyes. There was fever in it—the fever of fret and mutiny and of a starved self-love.

Dora looked at her cousin with less patience than usual—perhaps because of the inevitable contrast between Lucy's posings and the true heartaches of the world.

'Lucy, what nonsense! You're just a bit worried, and you make such a lot of it. Why can't you be patient?'

'Because I can't!' said Lucy, sombrely, dropping into a chair, and letting her arm fall over the back. 'It's all very well, Dora. You aren't in love with a man whom you never see, and whom your father has a spite on! And you won't do anything to help me—you won't move a finger. And, of *course*, you might!'

'What could I do, Lucy?' cried Dora, exasperated. 'I can't go and ask young Grieve to marry you. I do wish you'd try and put him out of your head, that I do. You're too young, and he's got his business to think about. And while Uncle Tom's like this, I can't be always putting myself forward to help you meet him. It would be just the way to make him think something bad—to make him suspect—'

'Well, and why shouldn't he suspect?' said Lucy, obstinately, her little mouth set and hard; 'it's all rubbish about girls leaving it all to the men. If a girl doesn't show she cares about a man, how's he to know—and when she don't meet him—and when her father keeps her shut up—*shameful!*'

She flung the word out through her small, shut teeth, the brows meeting over her flashing eyes.

'Oh! it's shameful, is it—eh, Miss Purcell?' said a harsh, mimicking voice coming from the dark passage leading into the shop.

Lucy sprang up in terror. There on the steps stood her father, bigger, blacker, more formidable than he had ever been in the eyes of the two startled girls. All unknown to them, the two doors which parted them from the shop had been slightly ajar,

and Purcell, catching their voices as they came in, and already on the watch for his daughter, had maintained a treacherous quiet behind them. Now he was entirely in his element. He surveyed them both with a dark, contemptuous triumph. What fools women were to be sure!

As he descended the two steps into the parlour the floor shook under his heavy tread. Dora had instinctively thrown her arm round Lucy, who had begun to cry hysterically. She herself was very pale, but after the first start she looked her uncle in the face.

'Is it you that's been teaching Lucy these *beautiful* sentiments?' said Purcell, with ironical emphasis, stopping a yard from them and pointing at Dora, 'and do you get 'em from St. Damian's?'

Dora threw up her head, and flushed. 'I get nothing from St. Damian's that I'm ashamed of,' she said in a proud voice, 'and I've done nothing with Lucy that I'm ashamed of.'

'No, I suppose not,' said Purcell dryly; 'the devil don't deal much in shame. It's a losing article.'

Then he looked at Lucy, and his expression suddenly changed. The flame beneath leapt to sight. He caught her arm, dragged her out of Dora's hold, and shook her as one might shake a kitten.

'Who were you talking of just now?' he said to her, holding her by both shoulders, his eyes blazing down upon her.

Lucy was much too frightened to speak. She stood staring back at him, her breast heaving violently.

Dora came forward in indignation.

'You'll get nothing out of her if you treat her like that,' she said, with spirit, 'nor out of me either.'

Purcell recovered himself with difficulty. He let Lucy go, and walking up to the mantelpiece stood there, leaning his arm upon it, and looking at the girls from under his hand.

'What do I want to get out of you?' he said, with scorn. 'As if I didn't know already everything that's in your silly minds! I guessed already, and now that you have been so obliging as to let your secrets out under my very nose—I *know!* That chit there'—he pointed to Lucy—all his gestures had a certain theatrical force and exaggeration, springing, perhaps, from his habit of lay preaching—'imagines she going to marry the young infidel I gave the sack to a while ago. Now don't she? Are you going to say no to that?'

His loud challenge pushed Dora to extremities, and it was all left to her. Lucy was sobbing on the sofa.

'I don't know what she imagines,' said Dora, slowly, seeking in vain for words; the whole situation was so ridiculous. 'Are you going to prevent her falling in love with the man she chooses?'

'*Certainly!*' said Purcell, with mocking emphasis. 'Certainly—since she chooses wrong. The only concern of the godly

in these matters is to see that their children are not yoked with unbelievers. Whenever I see that young reprobate in the street now, I smell *the pit.* And it'll not be long before the Lord tumbles him into it; there's an end comes to such devil's fry as that. Oh, they may prosper and thrive, they may revile the children of the Lord, they may lift up the hoof against the poor Christian, but the time comes—*the time comes.*'

His solemnity, at once unctuous and full of vicious meaning, only irritated Dora. But Lucy raised herself from the sofa, and looked suddenly round at her father. Her eyes were streaming, her hair in disorder, but there was a suspicion and intelligence in her look which seemed to give her back self-control. She watched eagerly for what her father might say or do next.

As soon as he saw her sitting up he walked over to her and took her again by the shoulder.

'Now look here,' he said to her, holding her tight, 'let's finish with this. That young man's the Lord's enemy—he's my enemy—and I'll teach him a lesson before I've done. But that's neither here nor there. You understand this. If you ever walk out of this door with him, you'll not walk back into it, with him or without him. I'd have done with you, and *my money* 'ld have done with you. But there'—and Purcell gave a little scornful laugh, and let her go with a push—'*he* don't care twopence about you—I'll say that for him.'

Lucy flushed fiercely, and getting up began mechanically to smooth her hair before the glass, with wild tremulous movements, will and defiance settling on her lip, as she looked at herself and at the reflection of her father.

'And as for you, Miss Lomax,' said Purcell deliberately, standing opposite Dora, 'you've been aiding and abetting somehow—I don't care how. I don't complain. There was nothing better to be expected of a girl with your parentage and bringing up, and a Puseyite into the bargain. But I warn you you'll go meddling here once too often before you've done. If you'll take my advice you'll let other people's business alone, and *mind your own.* Them that have got Adrian Lomax on their hands needn't go poaching on their neighbours for something to do.'

He spoke with a slow, vindictive emphasis, and Dora shrank and quivered as though he had struck her. Then by a great effort—the effort of one who had not gone through a close and tender training of the soul for nothing—she put from her both her anger and her fear.

'You're cruel to father,' she said, her voice fluttering; 'you might be thinking sometimes how straight he's kept since he took the Parlour. And I don't believe young Grieve means any harm to you or anybody—and I'm sure I don't.'

A sob rose in her throat. Anybody less crassly armoured in self-love than Purcell must have been touched. As for him, he turned on his heel.

'I'll protect myself, thank you,' he said dryly; 'and I'll judge

for myself. You can do as you like, and Lucy too, so long as she takes the consequences. Do you understand, Lucy?'

'Yes,' said Lucy, facing round upon him, all tremulous passion and rebellion, but she could not meet his fixed, tyrannical eye. Her own wavered and sank. Purcell enjoyed the spectacle of her for a second or two, smiled, and went.

As soon as he was gone, Lucy dragged her cousin to the stairs, and never let her go till Dora was safe in her room and the door bolted.

Dora implored to be released. How could she stay in her uncle's house after such a scene? and she must get home quickly anyway, as Lucy knew.

Lucy took no notice at all of what she was saying.

'Look here,' she said, breaking into the middle of Dora's appeal, and speaking in an excited whisper—'he's going to do him a mischief. I'm certain he is. That's how he looks when he's going to pay some one out. Now, what's he going to do? I'll know somehow—trust me!'

She was sitting on the edge of the bed, her arms behind her, supporting her, her little feet beating each other restlessly—a hot, vindictive anger speaking from every feature, every movement. The pretty chit of seventeen seemed to have disappeared. Here was every promise of a wilful and obstinate woman, with more of her father's stuff in her than anyone could have yet surmised.

A pang rose in Dora. She rose impulsively, and throwing herself down by Lucy, drew the ruffled, palpitating creature into her arms.

'Oh, Lucy, isn't it only because you're angry and vexed, and because you want to fight Uncle Purcell? Oh, don't go on just for that! When we're—we're Christians, we mustn't want our own way—we must give it up—*we must give it up.*' Her voice sank in a burst of tears, and she drooped her head on Lucy's, kissing her cousin's brown hair.

Lucy extricated herself with a movement of impatience.

'When one *loves* anybody,' she said, sitting very upright and twisting her fingers together, 'one must stick to him!'

Dora started at the word 'love.' It seemed to her a profanation. She dried her eyes, and got up to go without another word.

'Well, Dora,' said Lucy, frowning, 'and so you'll do nothing for me—*nothing?*'

Dora stood a moment in a troubled silence. Then she turned, and took gentle hold of her cousin.

'If I get a chance, Lucy, I'll try and find out whether he's thinking of marrying at all. And if he isn't—and I'm sure he isn't—will you give it all up, and try and live comfortable with Uncle Purcell, and think of something else?'

Her eyes had a tender, nay a passionate entreaty in them.

'No!' said Lucy with energy; 'but I'll very likely drown myself in the river some fine night.'

Dora still held her, standing above her, and looking down at her, trying hard to read her true mind. Lucy bore it defiantly for a minute; then suddenly two large tears rose. A quiver passed over Dora's face; she kissed her cousin quickly, and went towards the door.

'And I'll find out what father's going to do, or my name isn't what it is!' said the girl behind her, in a shrill, shaking voice, as she closed the door.

Dora ran back to Market Place, filled with a presentiment that she was late, though the hand of the Cathedral clock was still far from three.

At the side door stood a woman with a shawl over her head, looking distractedly up the street.

'Oh, Miss Dora! Miss Dora! they've sent. He's gooin—gooin quick. An' he keeps wearyin' for "mither an' Miss Dora."'

The powerful scarred face had the tremulous helplessness of grief. Dora took her by the arm.

'Let us run, Sarah—at once. Oh, never mind the work!'

The two women hurried through the crowded Saturday streets. But halfway up Market Street Sarah stopped short, looking round her in an agony.

'Theer's his feyther, Miss Dora. Oh, he wor a bad 'un to me, but he had allus a soft spot for t' lad. I'd be reet glad to send worrud. He wor theer in the ward, they tell't me, last week.'

Three years before she had separated from her husband, a sawyer, by mutual consent. He was younger than she, and he had been grossly unfaithful to her; she came of a good country stock and her daleswoman's self-respect could put up with him no longer. But she had once been passionately in love with him, and, as she said, he had been on the whole kind to the boy.

'Where is he?' said Dora.

'At Mr. Whitelaw's yard, Edgell Street, Great Ancoats.'

They had just entered the broad Infirmary Square. Dora, looking round her in perplexity, suddenly saw coming towards them the tall figure of David Grieve. The leap of the heart of which she was conscious through all her preoccupation startled her. But she went up to him without a moment's hesitation. David, swinging along as though Manchester belonged to him, found himself arrested and, looking down, saw Dora's pale and agitated face.

'Mr. Grieve, will you help me?'

She drew him to the side and explained as quickly as she could. Sarah stood by, and threw in directions.

'He'll be to be found at Mr. Whitelaw's yard—Edgell Street—an' whoever goos mun just say to him, "Sarah says to tha—Wilt tha coom, or wilt tha not coom?—t' lad's deein."'

She threw out the words with a sombre simplicity and force, then, her whole frame quivering with impatience, she crossed the road to the Infirmary without waiting for Dora.

'Can you send some one?' said Dora.

'I will go myself at once. I'll find the man if he's there, and bring him. You leave it to me.'

He turned without more ado, broke into a run, and disappeared round the corner of Oldham Street.

Dora crossed to the Infirmary, her mind strangely divided for a moment between the solemn image of what was coming, and the vibrating memory of something just past.

But, once in the great ward, pity and death possessed her wholly. He knew them, the poor lad—made, as it seemed, two tremulous movements,—once, when his mother's uncontrollable crying passed into his failing ear—once when Dora's kiss was laid upon his hollow temple. Then again he lay unconscious, drawing gently to the end.

Dora knelt beside him praying, his mother on the other side, and the time passed. Then there were sounds about the bed, and looking up, Dora saw two figures approaching. In front was a middle-aged man, with a stupid, drink-stained face. He came awkwardly and unsteadily up to the bedside, almost stumbling over his wife, and laying his hand on the back of a chair to support himself. He brought with him an overpowering smell of beer, and Dora thought as she looked at him that he had only a very vague idea of what was going on. His wife took no notice of him whatever.

Behind at some little distance, his hat in his hand, stood David Grieve. Why did he stay? Dora could not get him out of her mind. Even in her praying she still saw the dark, handsome head and lithe figure thrown out against the whiteness of the hospital walls.

There was a slight movement in the bed, and the nurse, standing beside the boy, looked up and made a quick sign to the mother. What she and Dora saw was only a gesture as of one settling for sleep. Without struggle and without fear, the little lad who had never lived enough to know the cost of dying, went the way of all flesh.

'They die so easily, this sort,' said the nurse to Dora, as she tenderly closed the patient eyes; 'it's like a plant that's never rooted.'

A few minutes later Dora was blindly descending the long stairs. The mother was still beside her dead, making arrangements for the burial. The father, sobered and conscious, had already slouched away. But at the foot of the stairs Dora, looking round, saw that David was just behind her.

He came out with her.

'He was drunk when I found him,' he explained, 'he had been drinking in the dinner hour. I had him by the arm all the way, and thought I had best bring him straight in. And then—I had never seen anyone die,' he said simply, a curious light in his black eyes.

Dora, still choked with tears, could not speak. With shaking hands she searched for a bit of veil she had with her to hide her eyes and cheeks. But she could not find it.

'Don't go down Market Street,' he said, after a shy look at her. 'Come this way, there isn't such a crowd.'

And turning down Mosley Street, all the way he guided her through some side streets where there were fewer people to stare. Such forethought, such gentleness in him were quite new to her. She gradually recovered herself, feeling all the while this young sympathetic presence at her side—dreading lest it should desert her.

He meanwhile was still under the tremor and awe of the new experience. So this was dying! He remembered 'Lias holding Margaret's hand. '*Deein 's long—but it's varra, varra peaceful.*' Not always, surely! There must be vigorous, tenacious souls that went out with tempests and agonies; and he was conscious of a pang of fear, feeling himself so young and strong.

Presently he led her into St. Ann's Square, and then they shook hands. He hurried off to his business, and she remained standing a moment on the pavement outside the church which makes one side of the square. An impulse seized her—she turned and went into the church instead of going home.

There, in one of the old oak pews where the little tarnished plates still set forth the names of their eighteenth-century owners, she fell on her knees and wrestled with herself and God.

She was very simple, very ignorant, but religion, as religion can, had dignified and refined all the elements of character. She said to herself in an agony—that he *must* love her—that she had loved him in truth all along. And then a great remorse came upon her—the spiritual glory she had just passed through closed round her again. What! she could see the heaven opened—the Good Shepherd stoop to take his own—and then come away to feel nothing but this selfish, passionate craving? Oh, she was ashamed, she loathed herself!

Lucy!—Lucy had no claim! should have no claim! He did not care for her.

Then again the pale dead face would flash upon her with its submissive look,—so much gratitude for so little, and such a tender ease in dying! And she possessed by all these bad and jealous feelings, these angry desires, fresh from such a presence!

'*Oh! Lamb of God—Lamb of God—that takest away the sins of the world!*'

CHAPTER VI

AND David, meanwhile, was thinking of nothing in the world but the fortunes of a little shop, about twelve feet square, and of the stall outside that shop. The situation—for a hero—is certainly one of the flattest conceivable. Nevertheless it has to be faced.

If, however, one were to say that he had marked none of Lucy Purcell's advances, that would be to deny him eyes as well as susceptibilities. He had, indeed, said to himself in a lordly way that Lucy Purcell was a regular little flirt, and was beginning those ways early. But a certain rough young modesty, joined with a sense of humour at his own expense, prevented him from making any more of it, and he was no sooner in his own den watching for customers than Lucy vanished from his mind altogether. He thought much more of Purcell himself, with much vengeful chuckling and speculation.

As for Dora, he had certainly begun to regard her as a friend. She had sense and experience, in spite of her Ritualism, whereas Lucy in his eyes had neither. So that to run into the Parlour, after each new day was over, and discuss with Daddy and her the ups and downs, the fresh chances and prospects of his infant business, was pleasant enough. Daddy and he met on the common ground of wishing to make the world uncomfortable for Purcell; while Dora supplied the admiring uncritical wonder, in which, like a warm environment, an eager temperament expands, and feels itself under the stimulus more inventive and more capable than before.

But marrying! The lad's careless good-humoured laugh under Ancrum's probings was evidence enough of how the land lay. Probably at the bottom of him, if he had examined, there lay the instinctive assumption that Dora was one of the girls who are not likely to marry. Men want them for sisters, daughters, friends—and then go and fall in love with some minx that has a way with her.

Besides, who could be bothered with 'gells,' when there was a stall to be set out and a career to be made? With that stall, indeed, David was truly in love. How he fingered and meddled with it!—setting out the cheap reprints it contained so as to show their frontispieces, and strewing among them, in an artful disorder, a few rare local pamphlets, on which he kept a careful watch, either from the door or from inside. Behind these, again, within the glass, was a precious shelf, containing in the middle of it about a dozen volumes of a kind dear to a collector's eye—thin volumes in shabby boards, then just beginning to be sought after—the first editions of nineteenth-century poets. For months past David had been hoarding up a few in a corner of his little lodging, and on his opening day they decoyed him in at least five inquiring souls, all of whom stayed to talk a bit. There was a 'Queen Mab,' and a 'Lyrical Ballads;' an 'Endymion;' a few Landors thrown in, and a 'Bride of Abydos'—this last not of much account, for its author had the indiscretion, from the collector's point of view, to be famous from the beginning, and so to flood the world with large editions.

Round and about these dainty morsels were built in with solid rubbish, with Daddy's 'Journals of Theology,' 'British Controversialist,' and the rest. In one top corner lurked a few battered

and cut-down Elzevirs, of no value save to the sentiment of the window, while a good many spaces were filled up with some new and attractive editions of standard books just out of copyright, contributed, these last, by the enterprising traveller of a popular firm, from whom David had them on commission.

Inside, the shop was of the roughest: a plank or two on a couple of trestles served for a counter, and two deal shelves, put up by David, ran along the wall behind. The counter held a few French scientific books, very fresh, and 'in the movement,' the result of certain inquiries put by old Barbier to a school friend of his, now professor at the Sorbonne—meant to catch the 'college people;' while on the other side lay some local histories of neighbouring towns and districts, a sort of commodity always in demand in a great expanding city, where new men have risen rapidly and families are in the making. For these local books the lad had developed an astonishing *flair*. He had the geographical and also the social instincts which the pursuit of them demands.

On his first day David netted in all a profit of seventeen shillings and twopence, and at night he curled himself up on a mattress in the little back kitchen, with an old rug for covering and a bit of fire, and slept the sleep of liberty.

In a few days more several of the old-established book-buyers of the town, a more numerous body, perhaps, in Manchester than in other northern centres, had found him out; a certain portly and wealthy lady, connected with one of the old calico-printing families, a person of character, who made a hobby of Lancashire Nonconformity, had walked into the shop, and given the boyish owner of it much good advice and a few orders; the Earl of Driffield had looked in, and, caught by the lures of the stall, customers had come from the most unlikely quarters, desiring the most heterogeneous wares. The handsome, intelligent young fellow, with his out-of-the-way strains of knowledge, with his frank self-conceit and his equally frank ignorance, caught the fancy of those who stayed to talk with him. A certain number of persons had been already taken with him in Purcell's shop, and were now vastly amused by the lad's daring and the ambitious range of his first stock.

As for Lord Driffield, on the first occasion when he had dropped in he had sat for an hour at least, talking and smoking cigarettes across David's primitive counter.

This remarkable person, of whom Lucy thought so little, was well known, and had been well known, for a good many years, to the booksellers of Manchester and Liverpool. As soon as the autumn shooting season began, Purcell, for instance, remembered Lord Driffield, and began to put certain books aside for him. He possessed one of the famous libraries of England, and he not only owned but read. Scholars all over Europe took toll both of his books and his brains. He lived to collect and to be consulted. There was almost nothing he did not know, except how to make

a book for himself. He was so learned that he had, so to speak, worked through to an extreme modesty. His friends, however, found nothing in life so misleading as Lord Driffield's diffidence.

At the same time Providence had laid upon him a vast family estate, and an aristocratic wife, married in his extreme youth to please his father. Lady Driffield had the ideas of her caste, and when they came to their great house near Stalybridge, in the autumn, she insisted on a succession of proper guests, who would shoot the grouse in a proper manner, and amuse her in the evenings. For, as she had no children, life was often monotonous, and when she was bored she had a stately way of making herself disagreeable to Lord Driffield. He therefore did his best to content her. He received her guests, dined with them in the evenings, and despatched them to the moors in the morning. But between those two functions he was his own master ; and on the sloppy November afternoons he might as often as not be seen trailing about Manchester or Liverpool, carrying his slouching shoulders and fair spectacled face into every bookseller's shop, good, bad, and indifferent, or giving lectures, mostly of a geographical kind, at popular institutions—an occupation in which he was not particularly effective.

David had served him, once or twice, in Half Street, and had sent a special notice of his start and his intentions to Benet's Park, the Driffields' 'place.' Lord Driffield's first visit left him quivering with excitement, for the earl had a way of behaving as though everybody else were not only his social, but his intellectual equal—even a lad of twenty, with his business to learn. He would sit pleasantly smoking and asking questions—a benevolent, shabby person, eager to be informed. Then, when David had fallen into the trap, and was holding forth—proud, it might be, of certain bits of knowledge which no one else in Manchester possessed—Lord Driffield would throw in a gentle comment, and then another and another, till the trickle became a stream, and the young man would fall blankly listening, his mouth opening wider and wider. When it was over, and the earl, with his draggled umbrella, had disappeared, David sat, crouched on his wooden stool, consumed with hot ambition and wonder. How could a man know so much—and an earl, who didn't want it? For a few hours, at any rate, his self-conceit was dashed. He realised dimly what it might be to know as the scholar knows. And that night, when he had shut the shutters, he vowed to himself, as he gathered his books about him, that five hours was enough sleep for a strong man ; that *learn* he must and should, and that some day or other he would hold his own, even with Lord Driffield.

How he loved his evenings—the paraffin lamp glaring beside him, the crackling of the coal in his own fire, the book on his knee ! Ancrum had kept his promise, and was helping him with his Greek ; but his teaching hardly kept pace with the boy's enthusiasm and capacity. The *voracity* with which he worked at

his Thucydides and Homer left the lame minister staring and sighing. The sound of the lines, the roll of the *oi*'s and *ou*'s was in David's ear all day, and to learn a dozen irregular verbs in the interval between two customers was like the gulping of a dainty.

Meanwhile, as he collected his English poets he read them. And here was a whole new world. For in his occupation with the Encyclopædists he had cared little for poetry. The reaction against his Methodist fit had lasted long, had developed a certain contempt for sentiment, a certain love for all sharp, dry, calculable things, and for the tone of *irony* in particular. But in such a nature such a phase was sure to pass, and it was passing. Burns, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson—now he was making acquaintance piecemeal with them all, as the precious volumes turned up, which he was soon able to place with a precision which tore them too soon out of his hands. The Voltairean temper in him was melting, was passing into something warmer, subtler, and more restless.

But he was not conscious of it. He was as secular, as cocksure, as irritating as ever, when Ancrum probed him on the subject of the Hall of Science or the various Secularist publications which he supported.

'Do you call yourself an atheist now, David?' said Ancrum one day, in that cheerful, half-ironic tone which the young bookseller resented.

'I don't call myself anything,' said David, stoutly. 'I'm all for this world; we can't know anything about another. At least, that's my opinion, sir—no offence to you.'

'Oh, dear me, no offence! There have been a *few* philosophers, you know, Davy, since Voltaire. There's a person called Kant; I don't know anything about him, but they tell me he made out a very pretty case, on the practical side anyway, for a God and immortality. And in England, too, there have been two or three persons of consequence, you remember, like Coleridge and John Henry Newman, who have thought it worth while to believe a little. But you don't care about that?'

The lad stood silent a moment, his colour rising, his fine lip curling. Then he burst out:

'What's the good of thinking about things by the wrong end? There's such a lot to read!'

And with a great stretch of all his young frame he fell back on the catalogue he was looking through, while Ancrum went on turning over a copy of 'The Reasoner,' a vigorous Secularist paper of the day, which he had found on the counter, and which had suggested his question.

Knowledge—success: it was for these that David burned, and he laid rapid hands upon them. He had a splendid physique, and at this moment of his youth he strained it to the utmost. He grudged the time for sleep and meals, and on Saturday afternoons, the early-closing day of Manchester, he would go out to country

sales, or lay plans for seeing the few considerable libraries—Lord Driffield's among them—which the neighbouring districts possessed. On Sunday he read from morning till night, and once or twice his assistant John, hammering outside for admittance in the winter dark, wakened the master of the shop from the rickety chair where he had fallen asleep over his books in the small hours of the morning.

His assistant! It may well be asked what a youth of twenty, setting up on thirty pounds capital in a small shop, wanted with an assistant before he had any business to speak of. The story is a curious one.

Some time in the previous summer Daddy had opened a smoking and debating room at the Parlour, by way of keeping his *clientèle* together and giving a special character to the place. He had merely boarded off a bit of the original seed warehouse, put in some rough tables and chairs, and a few newspapers. But by a conjunction of circumstances the place had taken a Secularist character, and the weekly debates which Daddy inaugurated were, for a time at least, well attended. Secularism, like all other forms of mental energy, had lately been active in Manchester; there had been public discussions between Mr. Holyoake and Mr. Bradlaugh as to whether Secularism were necessarily atheistic or no. Some of the old newspapers of the movement, dating from Chartist days, had recently taken a new lease of life; and combined with the protest against theology was a good deal of co-operative and republican enthusiasm. Lomax, who had been a Secularist and an Owenite for twenty years, and who was a republican to boot, threw himself into the *mêlée*, and the Parlour debates during the whole of the autumn and winter of '69–70 were full of life, and brought out a good many young speakers, David Grieve among them. Indeed, David was for a time the leader of the place, so ready was his gift, so confident and effective his personality.

On one occasion in October he was holding forth on 'Science—the true Providence of Life.' The place was crowded. A well-known Independent had been got hold of to answer the young Voltairean, and David was already excited, for his audience was plying him with interruptions, and taxing to the utmost a natural debating power.

In the midst of it a printer's devil from the restaurant outside, a stout, stupid-looking lad, found his way in, and stood at the door listening. The fine classical head of the speaker, the beautiful voice, the gestures so free and flowing, the fire and fervour of the whole performance—these things left him gaping.

'Who's that?' he ventured to inquire of a man near him, a calico salesman, well known in the Salford Conservative Association, who had come to support the Independent speaker.

The man laughed.

'That's young Grieve, assistant to old Purcell, Half Street. He talks a d——d lot of stuff—blasphemous stuff, too; but if

somebody 'd take and teach him and send him into Parliament, some day he'd make 'em skip, I warrant yo. I never heard onybody frame better for public speaking, and I've heard a lot.'

The printer's devil stayed and stared through the debate. Then, afterwards, he began to haunt the paths of this young Satan, crept up to him in the news-room, skulked about him in the restaurant. At last David took notice of him, and they made friends.

'Have you got anybody belonging to you?' he asked him, shortly.

'No,' said the boy. 'Father died last spring; mother was took with pleurisy in November—'

But the words stuck in his throat, and he coughed over them.

'All right,' said David; 'come for a walk Sunday afternoon?'

So a pretty constant companionship sprang up between them. John Dalby came of a decent stock, and was still, as it were, under the painful and stupefying surprise of those bereavements which had left him an orphan. His blue eyes looked bewilderment at the world; he was bullied by the compositors he worked under. Sometimes he had violent fits of animal spirits, but in general he was dull and silent, and no one could have guessed that he often read poetry and cried himself to sleep in the garret where he lodged. Physically he was a great, overgrown creature, not, in truth, much younger than David. But while David was already the man, John was altogether in the tadpole-stage—a being of large, ungainly frame, at war with his own hands and feet, his small eyes lost in his pink, spreading cheeks, his speech shy and scanty. Yet, such as he was, David found a use for him. Temperaments of the fermenting, expansive sort want a listener at the moment of early maturity, and almost any two-legged thing with the listener's gift will do. David worked off much steam on the Saturday or Sunday afternoons, when the two would push out into the country, walking some twenty miles or so for the sheer joy of movement. While the one talked and declaimed, ploughing his violent way through the soil of his young thought, the other, fat and silent, puffed alongside, and each in his own way was happy.

Just about the time David was dismissed by Purcell, John's apprenticeship came to an end. When he heard of the renting of the shop in Potter Street, he promptly demanded to come as assistant.

'Don't be a fool!' said David, turning upon him; 'what should I want with an assistant in that bit of a place? And I couldn't pay you, besides, man.'

'Don't mind that,' said John, stoutly. 'I'd like to learn the trade. Perhaps you'll set up a printing business by-and-by. Lots of booksellers do. Then I'll be handy.'

'And how the deuce are you going to live?' cried David, somewhat exasperated by these unpractical proposals. 'You're not

exactly a grasshopper;' and his eye, half angry, half laughing, ran over John's plump person.

To which John replied, undisturbed, that he had got four pounds still of the little hoard his mother had left him, and, judging by what David had told him of his first months in Manchester, he could make that last for living a good while. When he had learnt something of the business with David, he would move on—trust him.

Whereupon David told him flatly that *he* wasn't going to help him waste his money, and sent him about his business.

On the very day, however, that David opened, he was busy in the shop, when he saw John outside at the stall, groaning under a bundle.

'It's Mr. Lomax ha sent you this,' said the lad, calmly, 'and I'm to put it up, and tell him how your stock looks.'

The bundle contained Daddy's contributions to young Grieve's window, which at the moment were very welcome; and David in his gratitude instructed the messenger to take back a cordial message. The only notice John took was to lift up two deal shelves that were leaning against the wall of the shop, and to ask where they were to go.

And, say what David would, he stuck, and would not be got rid of. With the Lancashire accent he had also the Lancashire persistence, and David after a while gave in, consented that he should stay for some weeks, at any rate, and then set to work to teach him, in a very impatient and intermittent way. For watching and bargaining at the stall, at any rate, for fetching and carrying, and for all that appertains to the carrying and packing of parcels, John presently developed a surprising energy. David's wits were thereby freed for the higher matters of his trade, while John was beast of burden. The young master could work up his catalogues, study his famous collections, make his own bibliographical notes, or run off here and there by 'bus or train in quest of books for a customer; he could swallow down his Greek verbs or puzzle out his French for Barbier in the intervals of business; the humbler matters of the shop prospered none the less.

Meanwhile both lads were vegetarians and teetotalers; both lived as near as might be on sixpence a day; and an increasing portion of the Manchester world—of that world, at any rate, which buys books—began, as the weeks rolled on, to take interest in the pair and their venture.

Christmas came, and David made up his accounts. He had turned over the whole of his capital in six weeks, had lived and paid his rent, and was very nearly ten pounds to the good. On the evening when he made this out he sat jubilantly over the fire, thinking of Louie. Certainly it would be soon time for him to send for Louie at this rate. Yet there were *pros* and *cons*. He would have to look after her when she did come, and there would be an end of his first freedom. And what would she find to do?

Silk-weaving had been decaying year by year in Manchester, and for hand-loom weaving, at any rate, there was no opening at all.

No matter! With his prosperity there came a quickening of the sense of kinship, which would not let him rest. For the first time for many years he thought often of his father. Who and what had his mother been? Why had Uncle Reuben never spoken of his parents, save that one tormented word in the dark? Why, his father could not have been thirty when he died! Some day he would make Uncle Reuben tell all the story—he would know, too, where his father was buried.

And meanwhile, in a few more weeks, he would write to Kinder. He would be good to Louie—he decidedly meant that she should have a good time. Perhaps she had grown out of her tricks by now. Tom said she was thought to be uncommon handsome. David made a little face as he remembered that. She would be all the more difficult to manage.

Yet all the time David Grieve's prosperity was the most insecure growth imaginable.

One evening Lucy rushed in late to see Dora.

'Oh, Dora! Dora! Put down your work at once and listen to me.'

Dora looked up in amazement, to see Lucy's little face all crimson with excitement and resolution.

'Dora, I've found it all out: he's going to buy the house over Mr. Grieve's head, and turn him into the street, just as he's got nicely settled. Oh! he's done it before, I can tell you. There was a man higher up Half Street he served just the same. He's got the money, and he's got the spite. Well now, Dora, it's no good staring. Has Mr. Grieve been up here lately?'

'No; not lately,' said Dora, with an involuntary sigh. 'Father's been to see him. He says he's that busy he can't come out. But, Lucy, how do you know all this?'

Whereupon, at first, Lucy wouldn't tell; but being at bottom intensely proud of her own cleverness at last confessed. She had been for long convinced that her father meant mischief to young Grieve, and had been on the watch. A little listening at doors here, and a little prying into papers there, had presently given her the clue. In a private drawer, unlocked by chance, she had found a solicitor's letter containing the full description of No. 15 Potter Street, and of some other old houses in the same street, soon to be sold and rebuilt. The description contained notes of price and date in her father's hand. That very evening the solicitor in question had come to see her father. She had been sent upstairs, but had managed to listen all the same. The purchase—whatever it was—was to be concluded 'shortly.' There had been much legal talk, and her father had seemed in a particularly good temper when Mr. Vance went away.

'Well now, look here,' said Lucy, frowning and biting her lips;

'I shall just go right on and see him. I thought I might have found him here. But there's no time to lose.'

Dora had bent over her frame again, and her face was hidden.

'Why, it's quite late,' she said, slowly ; 'the shop will be shut up long ago.'

'I don't care—I don't care a bit,' cried Lucy. 'One can't think about what's proper. I'm just going straight away.'

And she got up feverishly, and put on her hat again.

'Why can't you tell father and send him? He's downstairs in the reading-room,' said Dora.

'I'll go myself, Dora, thank you,' said Lucy, with an obstinate toss of her head, as she stood before the old mirror over the mantelpiece. 'I dare say you think I'm a very bold girl. It don't matter.'

Then for a minute she became absorbed in putting one side of her hair straight. Dora, from behind, sat looking at her, needle in hand. The gaslight fell on her pale, disturbed face, showed for an instant a sort of convulsion pass across it which Lucy did not see. Then she drew her hand along her eyes, with a low, quivering breath, and went back to her work.

As Lucy opened the door, however, a movement of anxiety, of conscience, rose in Dora.

'Lucy, shall I go with you?'

'Oh, no,' said Lucy, impatiently. 'I know what's what, thank you, Dora. I'll take care of myself. Perhaps I'll come back and tell you what he says.'

And she closed the door behind her. Dora did not move from her work; but her hand trembled so that she made several false stitches and had to undo them.

Meanwhile Lucy sped along across Market Street and through St. Ann's Square. Her blood was up, and she could have done anything, braved anybody, to defeat her father and win a smile from David Grieve. Yet, as she entered Potter Street, she began to quake a little. The street was narrow and dark. On one side the older houses had been long ago pulled down and replaced by tall warehouses, which at night were a black and towering mass, without a light anywhere. The few shops opposite closed early, for in the office quarter of Manchester there is very little doing after office hours, when the tide of life ebbs outwards.

Lucy looked for No. 15, her heart beating fast. There was a light in the first floor, but the shop-front was altogether dark. She crossed the street, and, lifting a shaking hand, rang the bell of the very narrow side door.

Instantly there were sounds inside—a step—and David stood on the threshold.

He stared in amazement at his unwonted visitor.

'Oh, Mr. Grieve—please—I've got something to tell you. Oh, no, I won't come in—we can stand here, please, out of the wind. But father's going to buy this place over your head, and I thought

I'd better come and tell you. He'll be pretty mad if he thinks I've let out; but I don't care.'

She was leaning against the wall of the passage, and David could just see the defiance and agitation on her face by the light of the gas-lamp outside.

He himself gave a low whistle.

'Well, that's rather strong, isn't it, Miss Purcell?'

'It's mean—it's abominable,' she cried. 'I vowed I'd stop it. But I don't know what he'll do to me—kill me, most likely.'

'Nobody shall do anything to you,' said David, decidedly. 'You're a brick. But look here—can you tell me anything more?'

She commanded herself with great difficulty, and told all she knew. David leant against the wall beside her, twisting a meditative lip. The situation was ominous, certainly. He had always known that his tenure was precarious, but from various indications he had supposed that it would be some years yet before his side of the street was much meddled with. That old fox! He must go and see Mr. Ancrum.

A passion of hate and energy rose within him. Somehow or other he would pull through.

When Lucy had finished the tale of her eavesdroppings, the young fellow shook himself and stood erect.

'Well, I *am* obliged to you, Miss Purcell. And now I'll just go straight off and talk to somebody that I think 'll help me. But I'll see you to Market Street first.'

'Oh!—somebody will see us!' she cried in a fever, 'and tell father.'

'Not they; I'll keep a look out.'

Then suddenly, as they walked along together, a great shyness fell upon them both. Why had she done this thing, and run the risk of her father's wrath? As David walked beside her, he felt for an instant, through all his gratitude, as though some one had thrown a lasso round him, and the cord were tightening. He could not have explained the feeling, but it made him curt and restive, absorbed, apparently, in his own thoughts. Meanwhile Lucy's heart swelled and swelled. She *did* think he would have taken her news differently—have made more of it and her. She wished she had never come—she wished she had brought Dora. The familiar consciousness of failure, of insignificance, returned, and the hot tears rose in her eyes.

At Market Street she stopped him hurriedly.

'Don't come any farther. I can get home.'

David, meanwhile, was saying to himself that he was a churlish brute; but for the life of him he could not get out any pretty speeches worthy of the occasion.

'I'm sure I take it most kind of you, Miss Purcell. There's nothing could have saved me if you hadn't told. And I don't know whether I can get out of it now. But if ever I can do anything for you, you know—'

'Oh, never mind!—never mind!' she said, incoherently, stabbed by his constraint. 'Good night.'

And she ran away into the darkness, choked by the sorest tears she had ever shed.

David, meanwhile, went on his way to Ancrum, scourging himself. If ever there was an ungrateful cur, it was he! Why could he find nothing nice to say to that girl in return for all her pluck? Of course she would get into trouble. Coming to see him at that time of night, too! Why, it was splendid!

Yet, all the same, he knew perfectly well that if she had been there beside him again, he would have been just as tongue-tied as before.

CHAPTER VII

On the following night David walked into the Parlour about eight o'clock, hung up his hat with the air of an emperor, and looked round for Daddy.

'Look here, Daddy! I've got something to say to you, but not down here: you'll be letting out my private affairs, and I can't stand that.'

'Well, come upstairs, then, you varmint! You're a poor sort of fellow, always suspecting your friends. Come up—come up with you! I'll humour you!'

And Daddy, bursting with curiosity, led the way upstairs to Dora's sitting-room. Dora was moving about amid a mass of silks, which lay carefully spread out on the table, shade melting into shade, awaiting their transference to a new silk case she had been busy upon.

As the door opened she look up, and when she saw David her face flushed all over.

Daddy pushed the lad in.

'Dora, he's got some news. Out with it, sir!'

And he stood opposite the young fellow, on tiptoe, quivering with impatience.

David put both hands in his pockets, and looked out upon them, radiant.

'I think,' he said slowly, 'I've scotched old Purcell this time. But perhaps you don't know what he's been after?'

'Lucy was in here last night,' said Dora, hesitating; 'she told me about it.'

'Lucy!' cried Daddy, exasperated. 'What have you been making secrets about? I'll have no secrets from me in this house, Dora. Why, when Lucy tells you something important, is it all hidden up from me? Nasty close ways!'

And he looked at her threateningly.

Nothing piqued the old Bohemian so much as the constant assumption of the people about him that he was a grown-up baby,

of no discretion at all. That the assumption was true made no difference whatever to the irritating quality of it.

Dora dropped her head a little, but said nothing. David interposed:

'Well, now *I'll* tell you all about it.'

His tone was triumph itself, and he plunged into his story. He described what Purcell had meant to do, and how nearly he had done it. In a month, if the bookseller had had his way, his young rival would have been in the street, with all his connection to make over again. At the moment there was not another corner to be had, within David's means, anywhere near the centre of the town. It would have meant a completely fresh beginning, and temporary ruin.

But he had gone to Ancrum. And Ancrum and he had bethought them of the rich Unitarian gentleman who had been David's sponsor when he signed his agreement.

There and then, at nine o'clock at night, Ancrum had gone off to Higher Broughton, where the good man lived, and laid the case before him. Mr. Doyle had taken the night to think it over, and the following morning he had paid a visit to his lawyer.

'He and his wife thought it a burning shame, he told Mr. Ancrum; and, besides, he's been buying up house property in Manchester for some time past, only we couldn't know that—that was just luck. He looked upon it as a good chance both for him and for me. He told his lawyer it must be all settled in three hours, and he didn't mind the price. The lawyer found out that Purcell was haggling, went in to win, put the cash down, and here in my pocket I've got the fresh agreement between me and Mr. Doyle—three months' notice on either side, and no likelihood of my being turned out, if I want to stay, for the next three or four years. Hurrah!'

And the lad, quite beside himself with jubilation, raised the blue cap he held in his hand, and flung it round his head. Dora stood and looked at him, leaning lightly against the table, her arms behind her. His triumph carried her away; her lips parted in a joyous smile; her whole soft, rounded figure trembled with animation and sympathy.

As for Daddy, he could not contain himself. He ran to the top of the stairs, and sent a kitchen-boy flying for a bottle of champagne.

'Drink, you varmint, drink!' he said, when the liquor came, 'or I'll be the death of you! Hold your tongue, Dora! Do you think a man can put up with temperance drinks when his enemy's smitten hip and thigh? Oh, you jewel, David, but you'll bring him low, lad—you'll bring him low before you've done—promise me that. I shall see him a beggar yet, lad, shan't I? Oh, nectar!'

And Daddy poured down his champagne, apostrophising it and David's vengeance together.

Dora looked distressed.

'Father—Lucy! How can you say such things?'

'Lucy—eh?—Lucy? She won't be a beggar. She'll marry; she's got a bit of good looks of her own. But, David, my lad, what was it you were saying? How was it you got wind of this precious business?'

David hesitated.

'Well, it was Miss Purcell told me,' he said. 'She came to see me at my place last evening.'

He drew himself together with a little nervous dignity, as though foreseeing that Daddy would make remarks.

'Miss Purcell!—what, Lucy?—*Lucy? Upon* my word, Davy! Why, her father'll wring her neck when he finds it out. And she came to warn you?'

Daddy stood a moment taking in the situation, then, with a queer grin, he walked up to David and poked him in the ribs.

'So there were passages—eh, young man—when you were up there?'

The young fellow straightened himself, with a look of annoyance.

'Nothing of the sort, Daddy; there were no passages. But Miss Lucy's done me a real friendly act, and I'd do the same for her any day.'

Dora had sat down to her silks again. As David spoke she bent closely over them, as though the lamp-light puzzled her usually quick perception of shade and quality.

As for Daddy, he eyed the lad doubtfully.

'She's got a pretty waist and a brown eye, Davy, and she's seventeen.'

'She may be for me,' said David, throwing his head back and speaking with a certain emphasis and animation. 'But she's a little brick to have given me notice of this thing.'

The warmth of these last words produced more effect on Daddy than his previous denials.

'Dora,' he said, looking round—'Dora, do you believe the varmint? All the same, you know, he'll be for marrying soon. Look at him!' and he pointed a thin theatrical finger at David from across the room. 'When I was his make I was in love with half the girls in the place. Blue eyes here—brown eyes there—nothing came amiss to me.'

'Marrying!' said David, with an impatient shrug of the shoulders, but flushing all over. 'You might wait, I think, till I've got enough to keep one on, let alone two. If you talk such stuff, Daddy, I'll not tell you my secrets when there are any to tell.'

He tried to laugh it off; but Dora's grey eye, glancing timidly round at him, saw that he was in some discomfort. There was a bright colour in *her* cheek too, and her hand touched her silks uncertainly.

'Thank you for nothing, sir,' said Daddy, unabashed. 'Trust an old hound like me for scenting out what he wants. But, go

along with you! I'm disappointed in you. The young men nowadays have got no *blood!* They're made of sawdust and brown paper. The world was our orange, and we sucked it. Bedad, we did! But *you*—cold-blooded cubs—go to the devil, I tell you, and read your Byron!'

And, striking an attitude which was a boisterous reminiscence of Macready, the old wanderer flung out the lines:

> 'Alas! when mingling souls forget to blend,
> Death hath but little left him to destroy.
> Ah! happy years! Once more, who would not be a boy?'

David laughed out. Daddy turned petulantly away, and looked out of window. The night was dreary, dark, and wet.

'Dora!'

'Yes, father.'

'Manchester's a damned dull hole. I'm about tired of it.'

Dora started, and her colour disappeared in an instant. She got up and went to the window.

'Father, you know they'll be waiting for you downstairs,' she said, putting her hand on his shoulder. 'They always say they can't get on without you on debating nights.'

'Stuff and nonsense!' said Daddy, throwing off the hand. But he looked mollified. The new reading-room was at present his pet hobby; his interest in the restaurant proper had dropped a good deal of late, or so Dora's anxiety persuaded her.

'It's quite true,' said David. 'Go and start 'em, Daddy, and I'll come down soon and cut in. I feel as if I could speak the roof off to-night, and I don't care a hang about what! But first I've got something to say to Miss Dora. I want to ask her a favour.'

He came forward smiling. She gave him a startled look, but her eyes—poor Dora!—could not light on him now without taking a new brightness. How well his triumph sat on him! How crisply and handsomely his black hair curled above his open brow!

'More secrets,' growled Daddy.

'Nothing of any interest, Daddy. Miss Dora can tell you all about it, if she cares. Now go along! Start 'em on the Bishop of Peterborough and the Secularists. I've got a lot to say about that.'

He pushed Daddy laughingly to the door, and came back again to where Dora was once more grappling with her silks. Her expression had changed again. Oh! she had so many things to open to him, if only she could find the courage.

He sat down and looked at a bit of her embroidery, which lay uncovered beside her on the frame.

'I say, that is fine work!' he said, wondering. 'I hope you get well paid for it, Miss Dora. You ought. Well, now, I do want to ask your advice. This business of the house has set me thinking about a lot of things.'

He lay back in his chair, with his hands in his pockets, and threw one leg over the other. He was in such a state of nervous excitement, Dora could see, that he could hardly keep himself still.

'Did I ever tell you about my sister? No, I know I haven't. I've kept it dark. But now I'm settled I want to have her to live with me. There's no one but us two, except the old uncle and aunt that brought us up. I must stick to her—and I mean to. But she's not like other girls. She's a queer one.'

He stopped, frowning a little as the recollections of Louie rushed across him, seeking for words in which to draw her. And directly he paused, Dora, who had dropped her silks again in her sudden astonishment, burst into questions. How old was his sister? Was she in Manchester? Had she a trade? Her soul was full of a warm, unexpected joy, her manner was eager—receptive. He took up his parable and told the story of his childhood and Louie's at the farm. His black eye kindled as he looked past Dora into the past—into the bosom of the Scout. Owing partly to an imaginative gift, partly to his reading habit, when he was stimulated—when he was, as it were, talking at large, trying to present a subject as a whole, to make a picture of it—he rose into ways of speech quite different from those of his class, and different from his own dialect of every day. This latent capacity for fine expression was mostly drawn out at this time by his attempts at public speaking. But to-night, in his excitement, it showed in his talk, and Dora was bewildered. Oh, how clever he was! He talked like a book—just like a book. She pushed her chair back from the silks, and sat absorbed in the pleasure of listening, environed too by the happy thought that he was making a friend of her, giving her—plain, insignificant, humble Dora Lomax—his confidence.

As for him, the more he talked the more he enjoyed talking. Never since he came to Manchester had he fallen into such a moment of unburdenment, of intimacy, or something like it, with any human being. He had talked to Ancrum and to John. But that was quite different. No man confides in a woman as he confides in a man. The touch of difference of sex gives charm and edge, even when, as was the case here, the man has no thrill whatever in his veins, and no thought of love-making in his head.

'You must have been very fond of your sister,' Dora said at last, tremulously. 'You two all alone—and no mother.'

Somehow the soft sentiment in her words and tone struck him suddenly as incongruous. His expression changed.

'Oh, I don't know,' he said, with a sort of laugh, not a very bright one. 'Don't you imagine I was a pattern brother; I was a brute to her lots of times. And Louie—ah, well, you'll see for yourself what she's like; she's a queer customer sometimes. And now I'll tell you what I wanted to ask you, Miss Dora. You see, if Louie comes it won't do for her to have no employment, after she's had a trade all day; and she won't take to mine—she can't abide books.'

And he explained to her his perplexities—the ebbing of the silk trade from Manchester, and so on. He might hire a loom, but Louie would get no work. All trades have their special channels, and keep to them.

So it had occurred to him, if Louie was willing, would Dora take her as an apprentice, and teach her the church work? He would be quite ready to pay for the teaching; that would be only fair.

'Teach her my work!' cried Dora, instinctively drawing back. 'Oh, I don't think I could.'

He coloured, and misunderstood her. In a great labour-hive like Lancashire, with its large and small industries, the native ear is very familiar with the jealous tone of the skilled worker, threatened with competition in a narrow trade.

'I didn't mean any offence,' he said, with a little stiffness. 'I don't want to take the bread out of anybody's mouth. If there isn't work to be had, you've only to say so, Miss Dora.'

'Oh, I didn't mean that,' she cried, wounded in her turn. 'There's plenty of work. At the shop last week they didn't know what to do for hands. If she was clever at it, she'd get lots of work. But—'

She laid her hand on her frame lovingly, not knowing how to explain herself, her gentle brows knitting in the effort of thought.

Her work was so much more to her than ordinary work paid for in ordinary coin. Into these gorgeous altar-cloths, or these delicate wrappings for chalice and paten, she stitched her heart. To work at them was prayer. Jesus, and His Mother, and the Saints: it was with them she communed as her stitches flowed. She sat in a mystic, a heavenly world. And the silence and solitude of her work made one of its chief charms. And now to be asked to share it with a strange girl, who could not love it as she did, who would take it as hard business—never to be alone any more with her little black book and her prayers!

And then she looked up, and met a young man's half-offended look, and a shy, proud eye, in which the nascent friendship of five minutes before seemed to be sinking out of sight.

'Oh yes, I will,' she cried. 'Of course I will. It just sounded a bit strange to me at first. I've been so used to be alone always.'

But he demurred now—wished stiffly to take back his proposal. He did not want to put upon her, and perhaps, after all, Louie would have her own notions.

But she could not bear it, and as he retreated she pressed forward. Of course there was work. And it would be very good for her, it would stir her up to take a pupil; it was just her old-maidish ways—it had startled her a bit at first.

And then, her reserve giving way more and more as her emotion grew, she confessed herself at last completely.

'You see, it's not just *work* to me, and it's not the money,

though I'm glad enough for that; but it's for the church; and I'd live on a crust, and do it for nothing, if I could!'

She looked up at him—that ardent dream-life of hers leaping to the eyes, transforming the pale face.

David sat silent and embarrassed. He did not know what to say—how to deal with this turn in the conversation.

'Oh, I know you think I'm just foolish,' she said, sadly, taking up her needle. 'You always did; but I'll take your sister—indeed I will.'

'Perhaps you'll turn her your way of thinking,' said David, with a little awkward laugh, looking round for his hat. 'But Louie isn't an easy one to drive.'

'Oh, you can't drive people!' cried Dora, flushing; 'you can't, and you oughtn't. But if Father Russell talked to her she might like him—and the church. Oh, Mr. Grieve, won't you go one Sunday and hear him—won't you—instead of—'

She did not finish her sentence, but David finished it for her: 'Instead of going to the Hall of Science? Well, but you know, Miss Dora, I being what I am, I get more good out of a lecture at the Hall of Science than I should out of Father Russell. I should be quarrelling with him all the time, and wanting to answer him.'

'Oh, you couldn't,' said Dora eagerly, 'he's so good, and he's a learned man—I'm sure he is. Mr. Foss, the curate, told me they think he'll be a bishop some day.'

'All the better for him,' said David, unmoved. 'It don't make any difference to me. No, Miss Dora, don't you fret yourself about me. Books are my priests.'

He stood over her, his hands on his sides, smiling.

'Oh, no!' cried Dora, involuntarily. 'You mustn't say that. Books can't bring us to God.'

'No more can priests,' he said, with a sudden flash of his dark eyes, a sudden dryness of his tone. 'If there is a God to bring us to—prove me that first, Miss Dora. But it's a shame to say these things to you—that it is—and I've been worrying you a deal too much about my stupid affairs. Good night. We'll talk about Father Russell again another time.'

He ran downstairs. Dora went back to her frame, then pushed it away again, ran eagerly to the window, and pulled the blind aside. Down below in the lighted street, now emptying fast, she saw the tall figure emerge, saw it run down the street, and across St. Mary's Gate. She watched it till it disappeared; then she put her hands over her face, and leant against the window-frame weeping. Oh, what a sudden descent from a moment of pure joy! How had the jarring note come? They had been put wrong with each other; and perhaps, after all, he would be no more to her now than before. And she had seemed to make such a leap forward—to come so near to him.

'Oh! I'll just be good to his sister,' she said to herself drearily, with an ache at her heart that was agony.

Then she thought of him as he had sat there beside her; and

suddenly in her pure thought there rose a vision of herself in his arms, her head against his broad shoulder, her hand stealing round his neck. She moved from the window and threw herself down in the darkest corner of the room, wrestling desperately with what seemed to her a sinful imagination. She ought not to think of him at all; she loathed herself. Father Russell would tell her she was wicked. He had no faith—he was a hardened unbeliever—and she could not make herself think of that at all—could not stop herself from wanting—*wanting* him for her own, whatever happened.

And it was so foolish too, as well as bad; for he hadn't an idea of falling in love with anybody—anyone could see that. And she who was not pretty, and not a bit clever—it was so likely he would take a fancy to her! Why, in a few years he would be a big man, he would have made a fortune, and then he could take his pick.

'Oh! and Lucy—Lucy would *hate* me.'

But the thought of Lucy, instead of checking her, brought with it again a wild gust of jealousy. It was fiercer than before, the craving behind it stronger. She sat up, forcing back her tears, her whole frame tense and rigid. Whatever happened he would *never* marry Lucy! And who could wish it? Lucy was just a little, vain, selfish thing, and when she found David Grieve wouldn't have her, she would soon forget him. The surging longing within refused, proudly refused, to curb itself—for Lucy's sake.

Then the bell of St. Ann's slowly began to strike ten o'clock. It brought home to her by association one of the evening hymns in the little black book she was frequently accustomed to croon to herself at night as she put away her work:

> O God who canst not change nor fail,
> Guiding the hours as they roll by,
> Brightening with beams the morning pale,
> And burning in the mid-day sky!
>
> Quench thou the fires of hate and strife,
> The wasting fever of the heart;
> From perils guard our feeble life,
> And to our souls thy peace impart.

The words flowed in upon her, but they brought no comfort, only a fresh sense of struggle and effort. Her Christian peace was gone. She felt herself wicked, faithless, miserable.

Meanwhile, in the stormy night outside, David was running and leaping through the streets, flourishing his stick from side to side in cut and thrust with an imaginary enemy whenever the main thoroughfares were left behind, and he found himself in some dark region of warehouses, where his steps echoed, and he was king alike of roadway and of pavement.

The wind, a stormy north-easter, had risen since the afternoon. David fought with it, rejoiced in it. After the little hot sitting-room, the stinging freshness, the rough challenge of the gusts, were delicious to him. He was overflowing with spirits, with health, with exultation.

As he thought of Purcell he could hardly keep himself from shouting aloud. If he could only be there to see when Purcell learnt how he had been foiled! And trust Daddy to spread a story which would certainly do Purcell no good! No, in that direction he felt that he was probably safe from attack for a long time to come. Success beckoned to him; his enemy was under foot; his will and his gifts had the world before them.

Father Russell indeed! Let Dora Lomax set him on. His young throat filled with contemptuous laughter. As a bookseller, *he* knew what the clergy read, what they had to say for themselves. How much longer could it go on, this solemn folly of Christian superstition? 'Just give us a good Education Bill, and we shall see!'

Then, as he fell thinking of his talk with Dora and Lomax, he wished impatiently that he had been even plainer with Daddy about Lucy Purcell. With regard to her he felt himself caught in a tangled mesh of obligation. He must, somehow, return her the service she had done him. And then all the world would think he was making up to her and wanted to marry her. Meanwhile—in the midst of real gratitude, a strong desire to stand between her and her father, and much eager casting about for some means of paying her back—his inner mind was in reality pitilessly critical towards her. Her overdone primness and neatness, her fashionable frocks, of which she was so conscious, her horror of things and people that were not 'nice,' her contented ignorance and silly chattering ways—all these points of manner and habit were scored against her in his memory. She had become less congenial to him rather than more since he knew her first. All the same, she was a little brick, and he would have liked one minute to kiss her for her pluck, make her some lordly present, and the next—never to see her again!

In reality his mind at this moment was filling with romantic images and ideals totally remote from anything suggested by his own everyday life. A few weeks before, old Barbier, his French master, had for the first time lent him some novels of George Sand's. David had carried them off, had been enchanted to find that he could now read them with ease and rapidity, and had plunged straightway into the new world thus opened to him with indescribable zest and passion. His Greek had been neglected, his science laid aside. Night after night he had been living with Valentine, with Consuelo, with Caroline in 'Le Marquis de Villemer.' His poetical reading of the winter had prepared the way for what was practically his first introduction to the modern literature of passion. The stimulating novelty and foreignness of it was stirring all his blood. George Sand's problems, her

situations, her treatment of the great questions of sex, her social and religious enthusiasms—these things were for the moment a new gospel to this provincial self-taught lad, as they had been forty years before to the youth of 1830. Under the vitalising touch of them the man was fast developing out of the boy; the currents of the nature were setting in fresh directions. And in such a mood, and with such preoccupations, how was one to bear patiently with foolish, friendly fingers, or with uncomfortable thoughts of your own, pointing you to *Lucy Purcell?* With the great marriage-night scene from 'Valentine' thrilling in your mind, how was it possible to think of the prim self-conceit, the pettish temper and mincing airs of that little person in Half Street without irritation?

No, no! *The unknown, the unforeseen!* The young man plunged through the rising storm, and through the sleety rain, which had begun to beat upon him, with face and eyes uplifted to the night. It was as though he searched the darkness for some form which, even as he looked, began to take vague and luminous shape there.

Next morning Daddy, in his exultation, behaved himself with some grossness towards his enemy. About eleven o'clock he became restless, and began patrolling Market Place, passing every now and then up the steps into the narrow passage of Half Street, and so round by the Cathedral and home. He had no definite purpose, but 'have a squint at Tom,' under the circumstances, he must, some way or other.

And, sure enough, as he was coming back through Half Street on one of his rounds, and was within a few yards of Purcell's window, the bookseller came out with his face set in Daddy's direction. Purcell, whose countenance, so far as Daddy could see at first sight, was at its blackest and sourest, and whose eyes were on the ground, did not at once perceive his adversary, and came stem on.

The moment was irresistible. Laying his thumbs in his waistcoat pocket, and standing so as to bar his brother-in-law's path, Daddy launched a few unctuous words in his smoothest voice.

'Tom, me boy, thou hast imagined a device which thou wast not able to perform. But the Lord, Tom, hath made thee turn thy back. And they of thy own household, Tom, have lifted up the heel against thee.'

Purcell, strong, dark-browed fellow that he was, wavered and blenched for a moment under the surprise of this audacious attack. Then with an oath he put out his hand, seized Daddy's thin shoulder, flung him violently round, and passed him.

'Speak to me again in the street, you scoundrel, and I'll give you in charge!' he threw behind him, as he strode on just in time to avoid a flight of street-arabs, who had seen the scuffle from a distance and were bearing down eagerly upon him.

Daddy went home in the highest spirits, stepping jauntily

along like a man who has fulfilled a mission. But when he came to boast himself to Dora, he found to his chagrin that he had only earned a scolding. Dora flushed up, her soft eyes all aflame.

'You've done nothing but mischief, father,' said Dora, bitterly. 'How *could* you say such things? You might have left Uncle Tom to find out for himself about Lucy. He'll be mad enough without your stirring him up. Now he'll forbid her to come here, or see me at all. I don't know what'll become of that child; and whatever possessed you to go aggravating him worse and worse I can't think.'

Daddy blinked under this, but soon recovered himself. No one, he vowed, could be expected to put up for ever with Purcell's mean tricks. He had held his tongue for twenty-one years, and now he had paid back one *little* text in exchange for the hundreds wherewith Purcell had been wont to break his bones for him in past days. As for Dora, she hadn't the spirit of a fly.

'Well, I dare say I am afraid,' said Dora, despondently. 'I saw Uncle Tom yesterday, too, and he gave me a look made me feel cold down my back. I don't like anybody to hate us like that, father. Who knows—'

A tremor ran through her. She gave her father a piteous, childish look. She had the timidity, the lack of self-confidence which seems to cling through life to those who have been at a disadvantage with the world in their childhood and youth. The anger of a man like Purcell terrified her, lay like a nightmare on a sensitive and introspective nature.

'Pish!' said Daddy, contemptuously; 'I should like to know what harm he can do us, now that I've turned so d——d respectable. Though it is a bit hard on a man to have to keep so in order to spite his brother-in-law.'

Dora laughed and sighed. She came up to her father's chair, put his hair straight, re-tied his tie, and then kissed him on the cheek.

'Father, you're not getting tired of the Parlour?' she said, unsteadily. He evaded her downward look, and tried to shake her off.

'Don't I slave for you from morning till night, you thankless chit, you? And don't you begrudge me all the little amusements which turn the tradesman into the man and sweeten the pill of bondage—eh, you poor-souled thing?'

Her eyes, however, drew his after them, whether he would or no, and they surveyed each other—he uneasily hostile; she sad. She slowly shook her head, and he perfectly understood what was in her mind, though she did not speak. He *had* been extremely slack at business lately; the month's accounts made up that morning had been unusually disappointing; and twice during the last ten days Dora had sat up till midnight to let her father in, and had tried with all the energy of a sinking heart to persuade herself that it was accident, and that he was only excited, and not drunk.

Now, as she stood looking at him, suddenly all the horror of those long-past days came back upon her, thrown up against the peace of the last few years. She locked her hands round his neck with a vehement pathetic gesture.

'Father, be good to me! don't let bad people take you away from me—don't, father—you're all I have—all I ever shall have.'

Daddy's green eyes wavered again uncomfortably.

'Stuff!' he said, irritably. 'You'll get a husband directly, and think no more of me than other girls do when the marrying fit takes 'em. What are you grinning at now, I should like to know?'

For she was smiling—a light tremulous smile which puzzled him.

'At you, father. You'll have to keep me whether you like it or no. For I'm not a marrying sort.'

She looked at him with a curious defiance, her lip twitching.

'Oh, we know all about that!' said Daddy, impatiently, adding in a mincing voice, ' "I will not love; if I do hang me; i' faith I will not." No, my pretty dear, not till the "wimpled, whining, purblind, wayward boy" comes this road—oh, no, not till next time! Quite so.'

She let him rail, and said nothing. She sat down to her work; he faced round upon her suddenly, and said, frowning:

'What do you mean by it, eh? You're as good-looking as anybody!'

'Well, I want you to think it, father,' she said, affectionately, raising her eyes to his. A mother must have seen the shrinking sadness beneath the smile. What Daddy saw was simply a rounded girlish face, with soft cheeks and lips which seemed to him made for kissing; nothing to set the Thames on fire, perhaps, but why should she run herself down? It annoyed him, touched his vanity.

'Oh, I dare say!' he said to her, roughly, with an affected brutality. 'But you'll be precious disappointed if some one else doesn't think so too. Don't tell me!'

She bent over her frame without speaking. But her heart filled with bitterness, and a kind of revolt against her life.

Meanwhile her conscience accused her about Lucy. Lucy must have got herself into trouble at home, that she was sure of. And it was unlike her to keep it to herself—not to come and complain.

Some days—a week—passed. But Dora dared not venture herself into her uncle's house after Daddy's escapade, and she was, besides, much pressed with her work. A whole set of altar furniture for a new church at Blackburn had to be finished by a given day.

The affairs of the Parlour troubled her, and she got up long before it was light to keep the books in order and to plan for the day. Daddy had no head for figures, and he seemed to her to be growing careless about expenses. Her timid, over-anxious mind

conjured up the vision of a slowly rising tide of debt, and it haunted her all day. When she went to her frame she was already tired out, and yet there she sat over it hour after hour.

Daddy was blind. But Sarah, the stout cook, who worshipped her, knew well enough that she was growing thin and white.

'If yo doan't draw in yo'll jest do yoursel a mischief,' she said to her, angrily. 'Yo're nowt but a midge onyways, and a body 'll soon be able to see through yo.'

'I shall be all right, Sarah,' Dora would say.

'Aye, we'st aw on us be aw reet in our coffins,' returned the irate Sarah. Then, melting into affection, 'Neaw, honey, be raysonable, an' I'st just run round t' corner, an' cook you up a bit o' meat for your supper. Yo git no strength eawt i' them messin things yo eat. Theer's nowt but wind in em.'

But not even the heterodox diet with which, every now and then, Dora for peace' sake allowed herself to be fed, behind Daddy's back, put any colour into her cheeks. She went heavily in these days, and the singularly young and childish look which she had kept till now went into gradual eclipse.

David Grieve dropped in once or twice during the week to laugh and gossip about Purcell with Daddy. Thanks to Daddy's tongue, the bookseller's plot against his boy rival was already known to a large circle of persons, and was likely to cost him customers.

Whenever she heard the young full voice below or on the stairs, Dora would, as it were, draw herself together—stand on her defence. Sometimes she asked him eagerly about his sister. Had he written? No; he thought he would still wait a week or two. Ah, well, he must let her know.

And, on the whole, she was glad when he went, glad to get to bed and sleep. Being no sentimental heroine, she was prosaically thankful that she kept her sleep. Otherwise she must have fallen ill, and the accounts would have gone wrong.

At last one evening came a pencil note from Lucy, in these terms:

'You may come and see me, father says. I've been ill.—Lucy.'

In a panic Dora put on her things and ran. Mary Ann, the little hunted maid, let her in, looking more hunted and scared than usual. Miss Lucy was better, she said, but she had been 'terr'ble bad.' No, she didn't know what it was took her. They'd got a nurse for her two nights, and she, Mary Ann, had been run off her legs.

'Why didn't you send for me?' cried Dora, and hurried up to the attic. Purcell did not appear.

Lucy was waiting for her, looking out eagerly from a bank of pillows.

Dora could not restrain an exclamation which was almost a cry. She could not have believed that anyone could have changed so in ten days. Evidently the acute stage—whatever had been

the illness—was past. There was already a look of convalescence in the white face, with its black-rimmed eyes and peeling lips. But the loss of flesh was extraordinary for so short a time. The small face was so thinned and blanched that the tangled masses of golden-brown hair in which it was framed seemed ridiculously out of proportion to it; the hand playing with some grapes on the counterpane was of a ghostly lightness.

Dora was shocked almost beyond speaking. She stood holding Lucy's hand, and Lucy looked up at her, evidently enjoying her consternation, for a smile danced in her hollow eyes.

'Lucy, *why* didn't you send for me?'

'Because I was so feverish at first. I was all light-headed, and didn't know where I was; and then I was so weak I didn't care about anything,' said Lucy, in a small thread of a voice.

'What was it?'

'Congestion of the lungs,' said the girl, with pride. 'They just stopped it, or you'd be laying me out now, Dora. Dr. Alford told father I was dreadful run-down or I'd never have taken it. I'm to go to Hastings. Father's got a cousin there that lets lodgings.'

'But how did you get so ill, Lucy?'

Lucy was silent a bit. Then she said:

'Sit down close here. My voice is so bad still.'

Dora sat close to her pillow, and bent over, stroking her hands with emotion. The fright of her entrance was still upon her.

'Well, you know,' she said in a hoarse whisper, 'father found out about me and Mr. Grieve—I don't know how, but it was one morning. I was sitting in here, and he came in all white, with his eyes glaring. I thought he was going to kill me, and I was that frightened, I watched my chance, and ran out of the door and along into Mill Gate as fast as I could to get away from him; and then I thought I saw him coming after me, and I ran on across the bridge and up Chapel Street a long, long way. I was in a terrible fright, and mad with him besides. I declared to myself I'd never come back here. Well, it was pouring with rain, and I got wet through. Then I didn't know where to go, and what do you think I did? I just got into the Broughton tram, and rode up and down all day! I had a shilling or two in my pocket, and I waited and dodged a bit at either end, so the conductor shouldn't find out. And that was what did it—sitting in my wet things all day. I didn't think anything about dinner, I was that mad. But when it got dark, I thought of that girl—you know her, too—Minnie Park, that lives with her brother and sells fents, up Cannon Gate. And somehow I dragged up there—I thought I'd ask her to take me in. And what happened I don't rightly know. I suppose I was took with a faint before I could explain anything, for I was shivering and pretty bad when I got there. Anyway, she put me in a cab and brought me home; and I don't remember anything about it, for I was queer in the head

very soon after they got me to bed. Oh, I *was* bad! It was just a squeak,'—said Lucy, her voice dropping from exhaustion; but her eyes glittered in her pinched face with a curious triumph, difficult to decipher.

Dora kissed her tenderly, and entreated her not to talk; she was sure it was bad for her. But Lucy, as usual, would not be managed. She held herself quite still, gathering breath and strength; then she began again:

'If I'd died, perhaps *he*'d have been sorry. You know who I mean. It was all along of him. And father 'll never forgive me—never. He looks quite different altogether somehow. Dora! you're not to tell him anything till I've got right away. I think—I think—I *hate* him!'

And suddenly her beautiful brown eyes opened wide and fierce.

Dora hung over her, a strange, mingled passion in her look. 'You poor little thing!' she said slowly, with a deep emphasis, answering not the unreal Lucy of those last words, but the real one, so pitifully evident beneath.

'But look here, Dora; when I'm gone away, you *may* tell him, you *must* tell him, Dora,' said the child, imperiously. 'I'd not have him see me now for anything. I made Mary Ann put all the glasses away. I don't want to remember what a fright I am. But at Hastings I'll soon get well; and—and remember, Dora, you *are* to tell him. I'd like him to know I nearly caught my death that day, and that it was all along of him!'

She laid her hands across each other on the sheet with a curious sigh of satisfaction, and was quiet for a little, while Dora held her hand. But it was not long before the stillness broke up in sudden agitation. A tremor ran through her, and she caught Dora's fingers. In her weakness she could not control herself, and her inmost trouble escaped her.

'Oh, Dora, he wasn't kind to me, not a bit—when I went to tell him that night. Oh! I cried when I came home. I *did* think he'd have taken it different.'

'What did he say?' asked Dora, quietly. Her face was turned away from Lucy, but she still held her hand.

'Oh, I don't know!' said Lucy, moving her head restlessly from side to side and gulping down a sob. 'I believe he was just sorry it was *me* he'd got to thank. Oh, I don't know!—I don't know!—very likely he didn't mean it.'

She waited a minute, then she began again:

'Oh of course you think I'm silly; and that I'd have much more chance if I turned proud, and pretended I didn't care. I know some girls *say* they'd never let a man know they cared for him first. I don't believe in 'em! But I don't care. I can't help it. It's my way. But, Dora, look here!'

The tears gathered thick in her eyes. Dora, bending anxiously over her, was startled by the change of expression in her. From what depths of new emotion had the silly Lucy caught the sweet-

ness which trembled for a moment through every line of her little trivial face?

'You know, Dora, it was all nonsense at the beginning. I just wanted some one to amuse myself with and pay me attentions. But it isn't nonsense now. And I don't want him all for myself. Friday night I thought I was going to die. I don't care whether the doctor did or not; *I* did. And I prayed a good deal. It was queer praying, I dare say. I was very light-headed, but I thanked God I loved him, though—though—he didn't care about me; and I thought if I did get well, and he were to take a fancy to me, I'd show him I could be as nice as other girls. I wouldn't want everything for myself, or spend a lot of money on dress.'

She broke off for want of breath. This moral experience of hers was so new and strange to her that she could hardly find words in which to clothe it.

Dora had slipped down beside her and buried her face in the bed. When Lucy stopped, she still knelt there in a quivering silence. But Lucy could not bear her to be silent—she must have sympathy.

'Aren't you glad, Dora?' she said presently, when she had gathered strength again. 'I thought you'd be glad. You've always wanted me to turn religious. And—and—perhaps, when I get well and come back, I'll go with you to St. Damian's, Dora. I don't know what it is. I suppose it's caring about somebody—and being ill—makes one feel like this.'

And, drawing herself from Dora's hold, she turned on her side, put both her thin hands under her cheek, and lay staring at the window with a look which had a certain dreariness in it.

Dora at last raised herself. Lucy could not see her face. There was in it a sweet and solemn resolution—a new light and calm.

'Dear Lucy,' she said, tremulously, laying her cheek against her cousin's shoulder, 'God speaks to us when we are unhappy—that was what you felt. He makes everything a voice to call unto Himself.'

Lucy did not answer at once. Then suddenly she turned, and said eagerly:

'Dora, did you ever ask him—did you ever find out—whether he was thinking about getting married? You said you would.'

'He isn't, Lucy. He was vexed with father for speaking about it. I think he feels he must make his way first. His business takes him up altogether.'

Lucy gave an irritable sigh, closed her eyes, and would talk no more. Dora stayed with her, and nursed her through the evening. When at last the nurse arrived who was to take charge of her through the night, Lucy pulled Dora down to her and said, in a hoarse, excitable whisper:

'*Mind* you tell him—that I nearly died—that father 'll never be the same to me again—and it was all for him! You needn't say *I* said so.'

Late that night Dora stood long at her attic-window in the roof looking out at the April night. From a great bank of clouds to the east the moon was just appearing, sending her light along the windy streamers which, issuing from the main mass, spread like wide open fingers across the inner heaven. Opposite there was an old timbered house, one of the few relics of an earlier Manchester, which still, in the very centre of the modern city, thrusts out its broad eaves and overhanging stories beyond the line of the street. Above and behind it, roof beyond roof, to the western limit of sight, rose block after block of warehouses, vast black masses, symbols of the great town, its labours and its wealth ; far to the right, closing the street, the cathedral cut the moonlit sky ; and close at hand was an old inn, with a wide archway, under which a huge dog lay sleeping.

Town and sky, the upper clouds and stars, the familiar streets and buildings below—to-night they were all changed for Dora, and it was another being that looked at them. In all intense cases of religious experience the soul lies open to 'voices'—to impressions which have for it the most vivid and, so to speak, physical reality. Jeanne d'Arc's visions were but an extreme instance of what humbler souls have known in their degree in all ages. The heavenly voices speak, and the ear actually hears. So it was with Dora. It seemed to her that she had been walking in a feverish loneliness through the valley of the shadow of death ; that one like unto the Son of Man had drawn her thence with warning and rebuke, and she was now at His feet, clothed and in her right mind. Words were in her ear, repeated again and again—peremptory words which stabbed and healed at once : '*Daughter, thou shalt not covet. I have refused thee this gift. If it be My will to give it to another, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me.*'

As she sank upon her knees, she thought of the confession she would make on Sunday—of the mysterious sanctity and sweetness of the single life—of the vocation of sacrifice laid upon her. There rose in her a kind of ecstasy of renunciation. Her love—already so hopeless, so starved !—was there simply that she might offer it up—burn it through and through with the fires of the spirit.

Lucy should never know, and David should never know. Unconsciously, sweet soul, there was a curious element of spiritual arrogance mingled with this absolute surrender of the one passionate human desire her life was ever to wrestle with. The baptised member of Christ's body could not pursue the love of David Grieve, could not marry him as he was now, without risk and sin. But Lucy—the child of schism, to whom the mysteries of Church fellowship and sacramental grace were unknown—for her, in her present exaltation, Dora felt no further scruples. Lucy's love was clearly 'sent' to her ; it was right, whether it were ultimately happy or no, because of the religious effect it had already had upon her.

The human happiness Dora dared no longer grasp at for herself she yearned now to pour lavishly, quickly, into Lucy's hands. Only so—such is our mingled life!—could she altogether still, violently and by force, a sort of upward surge of the soul which terrified her now and then. A mystical casuistry, bred in her naturally simple nature by the subtle influences of a long-descended Christianity, combined in her with a piteous human instinct. When she rose from her knees she was certain that she would never win and marry David Grieve; she was equally certain that she would do all in her power to help little Lucy to win and marry him.

So, like them of old, she pressed the spikes into her flesh, and found a numbing consolation in the pain.

CHAPTER VIII

Some ten days more elapsed before Lucy was pronounced fit to travel south. During this time Dora saw her frequently, and the bond between the two girls grew much closer than before. On the one hand, Lucy yielded herself more than she had ever done yet to Dora's example and persuasion, promised to go to church and see at least what it was like when she got to Hastings, and let Dora provide her with some of her favourite High Church devotional books. On the other, it was understood between them that Dora would look after Lucy's interests, and keep her informed how the land lay while she was in the south, and Lucy, with the blindness of self-love, trusted herself to her cousin without a suspicion or a qualm.

While she was tending Lucy, Dora never saw Purcell but twice, when she passed him in the little dark entry leading to the private part of the house, and on those occasions he did not, so far as she could perceive, make any answer whatever to her salutation. He was changed, she thought. He had always been a morose-looking man, with an iron jaw; but now there was a fixed venom and disquiet, as well as a new look of age, in the sallow face, which made it doubly unpleasing. She would have been sorry for his loneliness and his disappointment in Lucy but for the remembrance of his mean plot against David Grieve, and for a certain other little fact. A middle-aged woman, in a dowdy brown-stuff dress and black mantle, had begun to haunt the house. She sat with Purcell sometimes in the parlour downstairs, and sometimes he accompanied her out of doors. Mary Ann reported that she was a widow, a Mrs. Whymper, who belonged to the same chapel that Purcell did, and who was supposed by those who knew to have been making up to him for some time.

'And perhaps she'll get him after all,' said the little ugly maid, with a grin. 'Catch me staying then, Miss Dora! It's bad enough as it is.'

On one occasion Dora came across the widow, waiting in the

little sitting-room. She was an angular person, with a greyish-brown complexion, a prominent mouth and teeth, and a generally snappish, alert look. After a few commonplaces, in which Mrs. Whymper was clearly condescending, she launched into a denunciation of Lucy's ill behaviour to her father, which at last roused Dora to defence. She waxed bold, and pointed out that Lucy might have been managed if her father had been a little more patient with her, had allowed her a few ordinary amusements, and had not insisted in forcing her at once, fresh from school, into ways and practices she did not naturally like, while she had never been trained to them by force of habit.

'Hoity toity, Miss!' said the widow, bridling, 'young people are very uppish nowadays. They never seem to remember there is such a thing as the fifth commandment. In *my* young days what a father said was law, and no questions asked; and I've seen many a Lancashire man take a stick to his gell for less provocation than this gell's given her feyther! I wonder at you, Miss Lomax, that I do, for backing her up. But I'm afraid from what I hear you've been taking up with a lot of Popish ways.'

And the woman looked her up and down with an air which plainly said that she was on her own ground in that parlour, and might say exactly what she pleased there.

'If I have, I don't see that it matters to you,' said Dora quietly, and retreated.

Yes, certainly, a stepmother looked likely! Lucy in her bedroom upstairs knew nothing, and Dora decided to tell her nothing till she was stronger. But this new development made the child's future more uncertain than ever.

On the day before her departure for Hastings, Lucy came out for a short walk, by way of hardening herself for the journey. She walked round the cathedral and up Victoria Street, and then, tired out with the exertion, she made her way in to Dora, to rest. Her face was closely hidden by a thick Shetland veil, for, in addition to her general pallor and emaciation, her usually clear and brilliant skin was roughened and blotched here and there by some effect of her illness; she could not bear to look at herself in the glass, and shrank from meeting any of her old acquaintances. It was, indeed, curious to watch the effect of the temporary loss of beauty upon her; her morbid impatience under it showed at every turn. But for it, Dora was convinced that she must and would have put herself in David Grieve's way again before leaving Manchester. As it was, she was still determined not to let him see her.

She came in, much exhausted, and threw herself into Daddy's arm-chair with groans of self-pity. Did Dora think she would ever be strong again—ever be anything but an ugly fright? It was hard to have all this come upon you, just through doing a service to some one who didn't care.

'Hasn't he heard yet that I've been ill?' she inquired petulantly.

No; Dora did not think he had. Neither she nor Daddy had seen him. He must have been extra busy. But she would get Daddy to ask him up to supper directly, and tell him all about it.

'And then, perhaps,' she said, looking up with a sweet, intense look—how little Lucy was able to decipher it!—'perhaps he may write a letter.'

Lucy was cheered by this suggestion, and sat looking out of window for a while, idly watching the passers-by. But she could not let the one topic that absorbed her mind alone for long, and soon she was once more questioning Dora in close detail about David Grieve's sister and all that he had said about her. For, by way of obliging the child to realise some of the inconvenient burdens and obligations which were at that moment hanging round the young bookseller's neck, and making the very idea of matrimony ridiculous to him, Dora had repeated to her some of his confidences about himself and Louie. Lucy had not taken them very happily. Everything that turned up now seemed only to push her further out of sight and make her more insignificant. She was thirsting, with a woman's nascent passion and a schoolgirl's vanity, to be the centre and heroine of the play; and here she was reduced to the smallest and meanest of parts—a part that caught nobody's eye, do what she would.

Suddenly she broke off what she was saying, and called to Dora:

'*Do* you see that pair of people, Dora? Come—come at once! What an extraordinary-looking girl!'

Dora turned unwillingly, being absorbed in a golden halo which she had set herself to finish that day; then she dropped her needle, and pushed her stool back that she might see better. From the cathedral end of Market Place an elderly grey-haired man and a young girl were advancing along the pavement towards the Parlour. As they passed, the flower-sellers at the booths were turning to look at them, some persons in front of them were turning back, and a certain number of errand-boys and other loungers were keeping pace with them, observing them. The man leant every now and then on a thick stick he carried, and looked uncertainly from house to house. He had a worn, anxious expression, and the helpless movements of short sight. Whenever he stopped the girl moved on alone, and he had to hurry after her again to catch her up. She, meanwhile, was perfectly conscious that she was being stared at, and stared in return with a haughty composure which seemed to draw the eyes of the passers-by after it like a magnet. She was very tall and slender, and her unusual height made her garish dress the more conspicuous. The small hat perched on her black hair was all bright scarlet, both the felt and the trimming; under her jacket, which was purposely thrown back, there was a scarlet bodice, and there was a broad band of scarlet round the edge of her black dress.

Lucy could not take her eyes off her.

'Did you *ever* see anybody so handsome, Dora? But what a fast, horrid creature to dress like that! And just look at her; she won't wait for the old man, though he's calling to her—she goes on staring at everybody. They'll have a crowd, presently! Why, they're coming *here!*'

For suddenly the girl stopped outside the doorway below, and beckoned imperiously to her companion. She said a few sharp words to him, and the pair upstairs felt the swing-door of the restaurant open and shut.

Lucy, forgetting her weakness, ran eagerly to the sitting-room door and listened.

There was a sound of raised voices below, and then the door at the foot of the stairs opened, and Daddy was heard shouting.

'There—go along upstairs. My daughter, she'll speak to you. And don't you come back this way—a man can't be feeding Manchester and taking strangers about, all in the same twinkling of an eye, you know, not unless he happens to have a few spare bodies handy, which ain't precisely my case. My daughter 'll tell you what you want to know, and show you out by the private door. Dora!'

Dora stood waiting rather nervously at the sitting-room door. The girl came up first, the old man behind her, bewildered and groping his way.

'We're strangers here—we want somebody to show us the way. We've been to the book-shop in Half Street, and they sent us on here. They were just brutes to us at that book-shop,' said the girl, with a vindictive emphasis and an imperious self-possession which fairly paralysed Lucy and Dora. Lucy's eyes, moreover, were riveted on her face, on its colour, its fineness of feature, its brilliance and piercingness of expression. And what was the extraordinary likeness in it to something familiar?

'Why!' said Dora, in a little cry, 'aren't you Mr. David Grieve's sister?'

For she had traced the likeness before Lucy. 'Oh, it must be!'

'Well, I am his sister, if you want to know,' said the stranger, looking astonished in her turn. 'He wrote to me to come up. And I lent the letter to uncle to read—that's his uncle—and he went and lost it somehow, fiddling about the fields while I was putting my things together. And then we couldn't think of the proper address there was in it—only the name of a man Purcell, in Half Street, that David said he'd been with for two years. So we went there to ask; and, *my!*—weren't they rude to us! There was an ugly black man there chivied us out in no time—wouldn't tell us anything. But as I was shutting the door the shopman whispered to me, "Try the Parlour—Market Place." So we came on here, you see.'

And she stared about her, at the room, and at the girls, taking in everything with lightning rapidity—the embroidery

frame, Lucy's veil and fashionably cut jacket, the shabby furniture, the queer old pictures.

'Please come in,' said Dora civilly, 'and sit down. If you're strangers here, I'll just put on my hat and take you round. Mr. Grieve's a friend of ours. He's in Potter Street. You'll find him nicely settled by now. This is my cousin, Mr. Purcell's daughter.'

And she ran upstairs, leaving Lucy to grapple with the new-comers.

The two girls sat down, and eyed each other. Reuben stood patiently waiting.

'Is the man at Half Street your father?' asked the new-comer, abruptly.

'Yes,' said Lucy, conscious of the strangest mingling of admiration and dislike, as she met the girl's wonderful eyes.

'Did he and Davy fall out?'

'They didn't get on about Sundays,' said Lucy, unwillingly, glad of the sheltering veil which enabled her to hold her own against this masterful creature.

'Is your father strict about chapel and that sort of thing?'

Lucy nodded. She felt an ungracious wish to say as little as possible.

David's sister laughed.

'Davy was that way once—just for a bit—afore he ran away. *I* knew he wouldn't keep it on.'

Then, with a queer look over her shoulder at her uncle, she relapsed into silence. Her attention was drawn to Dora's frame, and she moved up to it, bending over it and lifting the handkerchief that Dora had thrown across it.

'You mustn't touch it!' said Lucy, hastily, provoked, she knew not why, by every movement the girl made. 'It's very particular work.'

'I'm used to fine things,' said the other, scornfully. 'I'm a silk-weaver—that's my trade—all the best brocades, drawing-room trains, that style of thing. If you didn't handle *them* carefully, you'd know it. Yes, she's doing it well,' and the speaker put her head down and examined the work critically. 'But it must go fearful slow, compared to a loom.'

'She does it splendidly,' said Lucy, annoyed; 'she's getting quite famous for it. That's going to a great church up in London, and she's got more orders than she can take.'

'Does she get good pay?' asked the girl eagerly.

'I don't know,' replied Lucy shortly.

'Because, if there's good pay,' said the other, examining the work again closely, 'I'd soon learn it—why I'd learn it in a week, you see! If I stay here I shan't get no more silk-weaving. And of course I'll stay. I'm just sick of the country. I'd have come up long ago if I'd known where to find Davy.'

'I'm ready,' said Dora in a constrained voice beside her.

Louie Grieve looked up at her.

'Oh, you needn't look so glum!—I haven't hurt it. I'm used to good things, stuffs at two guineas a yard, and the like of that. What money do you take a week?' and she pointed to the frame.

Something in the tone and manner made the question specially offensive. Dora pretended not to hear it.

'Shall we go now?' she said, hurriedly covering her precious work up from those sacrilegious fingers and putting it away. 'Lucy, you ought to be going home.'

'Well, I will directly,' said Lucy. 'Don't you bother about me.'

They all went downstairs. Lucy put up her veil, and pressed her face against the window, watching for them. As she saw them cross Market Street, she was seized with hungry longing. She wanted to be going with them, to talk to him herself—to let him see what she had gone through for him. It would be months and months, perhaps, before they met again. And Dora would see him—his horrid sister—everyone but she. He would forget all about her, and she would be dull and wretched at Hastings.

But as she turned away in her restless pain, she caught sight of her changed face in the cracked looking-glass over the mantel-piece. Her white lips tightened. She drew down her veil, and went home.

Meanwhile Dora led the way to Potter Street. Louie took little notice of any attempts to talk to her. She was wholly engaged in looking about her and at the shops. Especially was she attracted by the drapers' windows in St. Ann's Square, pronouncing her opinion loudly and freely as to their contents.

Dora fell meditating. Young Grieve would have his work cut out for him, she thought, if this extraordinary sister were really going to settle with him. She was very like him—strangely like him. And yet in the one face there was a quality which was completely lacking in the other, and which seemed to make all the difference. Dora tried to explain what she meant to herself, and failed.

'Here's Potter Street,' she said, as they turned into it. 'And that's his shop—that one with the stall outside. Oh, there he is!'

David was in fact standing on his step talking to a customer who was turning over the books outside.

Louie looked at him. Then she began to run. Old Grieve too, crimson all over, and evidently much excited, hurried on. Dora fell behind, her quick sympathies rising.

'They won't want me interfering,' she said, turning round. 'I'll just go back to my work.'

Meanwhile, in David's little back room, which he had already swept and garnished—for after his letter of the night before, he had somehow expected Louie to rush upon him by the earliest

possible train—the meeting of these long-sundered persons took place.

David saw Reuben come in with amazement.

'Why, Uncle Reuben! Well, I'm real glad to see you. I didn't think you'd have been able to leave the farm. Well, this is my bit of a place, you see. What do you think of it?'

And, holding his sister by the hand, the young fellow looked joyously at his uncle, pride in his new possessions and the recollection of his destitute childhood rushing upon him together as he spoke.

'Aye, it's a fine beginning yo've made, Davy,' said the old man, cautiously looking round, first at the little room, with its neat bits of new furniture in Louie's honour, and then through the glass door at the shop, which was now heavily lined with books. 'Yo wor allus a cliver lad, Davy. A' think a'll sit down.'

And Reuben, subsiding into a chair, fell forthwith into an abstraction, his old knotted hands trembling a little on his knees.

Meanwhile David was holding Louie at arm's-length to look at her. He had kissed her heartily when she came in first, and now he was all pleasure and excitement.

''Pon my word, Louie, you've grown as high as the roof! I say, Louie, what's become of that smart pink dress you wore at last "wake," and of that overlooker, with the moustaches, from New Mills, you walked about with all day?'

She stared at him open-mouthed.

'What do you mean by that?' she said, quickly.

David laughed out.

'And who was it gave Jim Wigson a box on the ears last fifth of November, in the lane just by the Dye-works, eh, Miss Louie?—and danced with young Redway at the Upper Mill dance, New Year's Day?—and had words with Mr. James at the office about her last "cut," a fortnight ago—eh, Louie?'

'What *ever* do you mean?' she said, half crossly, her colour rising. 'You've been spying on me.'

She hated to be mystified. It made her feel herself in some one else's power; and the wild creature in her blood grew restive.

'Why, I've known all about you these four years!' the lad began, with dancing eyes. Then suddenly his voice changed, and dropped: 'I say, look at Uncle Reuben!'

For Reuben sat bent forward, his light blurred eyes looking out straight before him, with a singular yet blind intentness, as though, while seeing nothing round about him, they passed beyond the walls of the little room to some vision of their own.

'I don't know whatever he came for,' began Louie, as they both examined him.

'Uncle Reuben,' said David, going up to him and touching him on the shoulder, 'you look tired. You'll be wanting some dinner. I'll just send my man, John Dalby, round the corner for something.'

And he made a step towards the door, but Reuben raised his hand.

'Noa, noa, Davy! Shut that door, wiltha?'

David wondered, and shut it.

Then Reuben gave a long sigh, and put his hand deep into his coat pocket, with the quavering, uncertain movement characteristic of him.

'Davy, my lad, a've got summat to say to tha.'

And with many hitches, while the others watched him in astonishment, he pulled out of his pocket a canvas bag and put it down on an oak stool in front of him. Then he undid the string of it with his large awkward fingers, and pushed the stool across to David.

'Theer's sixty pund theer, Davy—sixty pund! Yo can keawnt it—it's aw reet. A've saved it for yo, this four year—four year coom lasst Michaelmas Day. Hannah nor nobory knew owt abeawt it. But it's yourn—it's yor share, being t' half o' Mr. Gurney's money. Louie's share—that wor different; we had a reet to that, she bein a growin girl, and doin nowt mich for her vittles. Fro the time when yo should ha had it—whether for wages or for 'prenticin—an yo *could*na ha it, because Hannah had set hersen agen it,—a saved it for tha, owt o' t' summer cattle moastly, without tellin nobory, so as not to mak words.'

David, bewildered, had taken the bag into his hand. Louie's eyes were almost out of her head with curiosity and amazement. '*Mr. Gurney's money!*' What did he mean? It was all double-Dutch to them.

David, with an effort, controlled himself, being now a man and a householder. He stood with his back against the shop door, his gaze fixed on Reuben.

'Now, Uncle Reuben, I don't understand a bit of what you've been saying, and Louie don't either. Who's Mr. Gurney? and what's his money?'

Unconsciously the young man's voice took a sharp, magisterial note. Reuben gave another long sigh. He was now leaning on his stick, staring at the floor.

'Noa,—a' know yo doan't understan; a've got to tell tha—'at's t' worst part on 't. An I'm soa bad at tellin. Do yo mind when yor feyther deed, Davy?' he said suddenly, looking up.

David nodded,—a red flush of presentiment spread itself over his face—his whole being hung on Reuben's words.

'He sent for me afore he deed,' continued Reuben, slowly; 'an he towd me aw about his affairs. Six hunderd pund he'd got saved—*six-hunderd-pund!* Aye, it wor a lot for a yoong mon like him, and after sich a peck o' troobles! And he towd me Mr. Gurney ud pay us th' interest for yor bringin-up—th' two on yo; an whan yo got big, Davy, I wor to tak keawnsel wi Mr. Gurney, an, if yo chose for t' land, yo were to ha yor money for a farm, when yo wor big eneuf, an if yo turned agen th' land, yo

wor to be 'prenticed to soom trade, an ha yor money when yo wanted it,—Mr. Gurney bein willin. An I promised him I'd deal honest wi his childer, an—'

Reuben paused painfully. He was wrestling with his conscience, and groping for words about his wife. The brother and sister sat open-mouthed, pale with excitement, afraid of losing a single syllable.

'An takkin it awthegither,' he said, bringing each word out with an effort, 'I doan't think, by t' Lord's mercy, as I've gone soa mich astray, though I ha been mich troobled this four year wi thowts o' Sandy—my brither Sandy—an wi not knowin wheer yo wor gone, Davy. Bit yo seem coom to an honest trade—an Louie theer ha larnt a trade too,—an addle't a bit money,—an she's a fine-grown lass—'

He turned a slow, searching look upon her, as though he were pleading a cause before some unseen judge.

'An theer's yor money, Davy. It's aw th' same, a'm thinkin, whether yo get it fro me or fro Mr. Gurney. An here—'

He rose, and unbuttoning his inner coat, fumbled in the pocket of it till he found a letter.

'An here is a letter for Mr. Gurney. If yo gie me a pen, Davy, I'll write in to 't yor reet address, an put it in t' post as I goo to t' station. I took noatice of a box as I coom along. An then—'

He stood still a moment pondering, one outspread hand on the letter.

'An then theer's nowt moor as a can remember,—an your aunt ull be wearyin; an it's but reet she should know now, at wonst, abeawt t' money a've saved this four year, an t' letter to Mr. Gurney. Yo understan—when yor letter came this mornin—t' mon browt it up to Louie abeawt eight o'clock—she towd me fust out i' th' yard—an I said to her, "Doan't you tell yor aunt nowt abeawt it, an we'st meet at t' station." An I made soom excuse to Hannah abeawt gooin ower t' Scout after soom beëasts—an—an—Louie an me coom thegither.'

He passed his other hand painfully across his brow. The travail of expression, the moral struggle of the last twenty-four hours, seemed to have aged him before them.

David sat looking at him in a stupefied silence. A light was breaking in upon him, transfiguring, combining, interpreting a hundred scattered remembrances of his boyhood. But Louie, the instant her uncle stopped, broke into a string of questions, shrill and breathless, her face quite white, her eyes glittering. Reuben seemed hardly to hear her, and in the middle of them David said sharply,

'Stop that, Louie, and let me talk to Uncle Reuben!'

He drew the letter from under Reuben's fingers, and went on, steadily looking up into his uncle's face:

'You'll let me read it, uncle, and I'll get you a pen directly to put in the address. But first will you tell us about father? You never did—you nor Aunt Hannah. And about mother, too?'

He said the last words with difficulty, having all his life been pricked by a certain instinct about his mother, which had, however, almost nothing definite to work upon. Reuben thought a minute, then sat down again patiently.

'Aye, a'll tell tha. Theer's nobory else can. An tha ought to know, though it'll mebbe be a shock to tha.'

And, with his head resting against his stick, he began to tell the story of his brother and his brother's marriage as he remembered it.

First came the account of Sandy's early struggles, as Sandy himself had described them on that visit which he had paid to the farm in the first days of his prosperity ; then a picture of his ultimate success in business, as it had appeared to the dull elder brother dazzled by the younger's 'cliverness.'

'Aye, he might ha been a great mon ; he might ha coom to varra high things, might Sandy,' said Reuben solemnly, his voice suddenly rising, 'bit for th' hizzy that ruined him !'

Both his hearers made an involuntary movement. But Reuben had now lost all count of them. He was intent on one thing, and capable only of one thing. They had asked him for his story, and he was telling it, with an immense effort of mind, recovering the past as best he could, and feeling some of it over again intensely.

So when he came to the marriage, he told the story like one thinking it out to himself, with an appalling plainness of phrase. It was, of course, impossible for him to *explain* Sandy's aberration—there were no resources in him equal to the task. Louise Suveret became in his account what she had always remained in his imagination since Sandy's employers told him what was known of her story—a mere witch and devil, sent for his brother's perdition. All his resentment against his brother's fate had passed into his hatred of this creature whom he had never seen. Nay, he even held up the picture of her hideous death before her children with a kind of sinister triumph. So let the ungodly and the harlot perish !

David stood opposite to the speaker all the while, motionless, save for an uneasy movement here and there when Reuben's words grew more scripturally frank than usual. Louie's face was much more positive than David's in what it said. Reuben and Reuben's vehemence annoyed and angered her. She frowned at him from under her black brows. It was evident that he, rather than his story, excited her.

'An we buried him aw reet an proper,' said Reuben at last, wiping his brow, damp with this unwonted labour of brain and tongue. 'Mr. Gurney he would ha it aw done handsome ; and we put him in a corner o' Kensal Green, just as close as might be to whar they'd put her after th' crowner had sat on her. Yor feyther had left word, an Mr. Gurney would ha nowt different. But it went agen me—aye, it *did*—to leave him wi *her* after aw !'

And falling suddenly silent, Reuben sat wrapped in a sombre mist of memory.

Then Louie broke out, rolling and unrolling the ribbons of her hat in hot fingers.

'I don't believe half on't—I don't see how you could know—nor Mr. Gurney either.'

Reuben looked round bewildered. Louie got up noisily, went to the window and threw it open, as though oppressed by the narrowness of the room.

'No, I don't,' she repeated, defiantly—'I don't believe the half on't. But I'll find out some day.'

She leaned her elbows on the sill, and, looking out into the squalid bit of yard, threw a bit of grit that lay on the window at a cat that sat sleepily blinking on the flags outside.

Reuben rose heavily.

'Gie me pen and ink, Davy, an let me go.'

The young man brought it him without a word. Reuben put in the address.

'Ha yo read it, Davy?'

David started. In his absorption he had forgotten to read it.

'I wor forced to write it i' the top sheepfold,' Reuben began to explain apologetically, then stopped suddenly. Several times he had been on the point of bringing Hannah into the conversation, and had always refrained. He refrained now. David read it. It was written in Reuben's most laborious business style, and merely requested that Mr. Gurney would now communicate with Sandy's son direct on the subject of his father's money. He had left Needham Farm, and was old enough to take counsel himself with Mr. Gurney in future as to what should be done with it.

Reuben looked over David's shoulder as he read.

'An Louie?' he said uncertainly, at the end, jerking his thumb towards her.

'I'm stayin here,' said Louie peremptorily, still looking out of window.

Reuben said nothing. Perhaps a shade of relief lightened his old face.

When the letter was handed back to him, he sealed it and put it into his pocket, buttoning up his coat for departure.

'Yo wor talkin abeawt dinner, Davy—or summat,' said the old man, courteously. 'Thankee kindly. I want for nowt. I mun get home—I mun get home.'

Louie, standing absorbed in her own excited thoughts, could hardly be disturbed to say good-bye to him. David, still in a dream, led him through the shop, where Reuben peered about him with a certain momentary curiosity.

But at the door he said good-bye in a great hurry and ran down the steps, evidently impatient to be rid of his nephew.

David turned and came slowly back through the little piled-up shop, where John, all eyes and ears, sat on a high stool in the corner, into the living room.

As he entered it Louie sprang upon him, and seizing him with both hands, danced him madly round the little space of vacant boards, till she tripped her foot over the oak stool, and sank down on a chair, laughing wildly.

'How much of that money am I going to have?' she demanded suddenly, her arms crossed over her breast, her eyes brilliant, her whole aspect radiant and exulting.

David was standing over the fire, looking down into it, and made no answer. He had disengaged himself from her as soon as he could.

Louie waited a while; then, with a contemptuous lip and a shrug of the shoulders, she got up.

'What's the good of worriting about things, I'd like to know? You won't do 'em no good. Why don't you think about the money? My word, won't Aunt Hannah be mad! How am I to get my parcels from the station, and where am I to sleep?'

'You can go and see the house,' said David, shortly. 'The lodgers upstairs are out, and there's the key of the attic.'

He threw it to her, and she ran off. He had meant to take her in triumphal progress through the little house, and show her all the changes he had been making for her benefit and his own. But a gulf had yawned between them. He was relieved to see her go, and when he was left alone he laid his arms on the low mantelpiece and hid his face upon them. His mother's story, his father's fate, seemed to be burning into his heart.

Reuben hurried home through the bleak March evening. In the train he could not keep himself still, fidgeting so much that his neighbours eyed him with suspicion, and gave him a wide berth. As he started to walk up to Kinder a thin, raw sleet came on. It drove in his face, chilling him through and through, as he climbed the lonely road, where the black moorland farms lay all about him, seen dimly through the white and drifting veil of the storm. But he was conscious of nothing external. His mind was absorbed by the thought of his meeting with Hannah, and by the excited feeling that one of the crises of his timid and patient life was approaching. During the last four years they had been very poor, in spite of Mr. Gurney's half-yearly cheque, partly because of the determination with which he had stuck to his secret saving. Hannah would think they were going now to be poorer still, but he meant to prove to her that what with Louie's departure and the restoration of their whole income to its natural channels, there would not be so much difference. He conned his figures eagerly, rehearsing what he would say. For the rest he walked lightly and briskly. The burden of his brother's children had dropped away from him, and in those strange inner colloquies of his he could look Sandy in the face again.

Had Hannah discovered his flight, he wondered? Some one, he was afraid, might have seen him and Louie at the station and

told tales. He was not sure that one of the Wigsons had not been hanging about the station yard. And that letter of David's to Louie, which in his clumsy blundering way he had dropped somewhere about the farm buildings or the house, and had not been able to find again! It gave him a cold sweat to think that in his absence Hannah might have come upon it and drawn her own conclusions. As he followed out this possibility in his mind, his step quickened till it became almost a run.

Aye, and Hannah had been ailing of late—there had been often 'summat wrang wi her.' Well, they were both getting into years. Perhaps now that Louie with her sharp tongue and aggravating ways was gone, now that there was only him to do for, Hannah would take things easier.

He opened the gate into the farmyard and walked up to the house door with a beating heart. It struck him as strange that the front blinds were not drawn, for it was nearly dark and the storm beat against the windows. There was a glimmer of fire in the room, but he could see nothing clearly. He turned the handle and went into the passage, making a clatter on purpose. But nothing stirred in the house, and he pushed open the kitchen door, which stood ajar, filled with a vague alarm.

Hannah was sitting in the rocking-chair, by the fire. Beside her was the table partly spread with tea, which, however, had been untouched. At Reuben's entrance she turned her head and looked at him fixedly. In the dim light—a mixture of the dying fire and of the moonlight from outside—he could not see her plainly, but he felt that there was something strange, and he ran forward to her.

'Hannah, are yo bad?—is there owt wrang wi yo?'

Then his seeking eye made out a crumpled paper in her left hand, and he knew at once that it must be Davy's letter.

Before he could speak again she gave him a push backward with her free hand, and said with an effort:

'Where's t' gell?'

'Louie? She's left i' Manchester. A've found Davy, Hannah.'

There was a pause, after which he said, trembling:

'Shall I get yo summat, Hannah?'

A hoarse voice came out of the dark:

'Ha doon wi yo! Yo ha been leein to me. Yo wor seen at t' station.'

Reuben sat down.

'Hannah,' he said, 'yo mun just listen to me.'

And taking his courage in both hands, he told everything without a break: how he had been 'feeart' of what Sandy might say to him 'at th' joodgment,' how he had saved and lied, and how now he had seen David, had written to Mr. Gurney, and stopped the cheques for good and all.

When he came to the letter to Mr. Gurney, Hannah sat suddenly upright in her chair, grasping one arm of it.

'It shall mak noa difference to tha, a tell tha,' he cried

hastily, putting up his hand, fearing he knew not what, 'nobbut a few shillins ony way. I'll work for tha an mak it up.'

She made a sound which turned him cold with terror—a sound of baffled weakness, pain, vindictive passion all in one—then she fell helplessly to one side in her chair, and her grey head dropped on her shoulder.

In another moment he was crying madly for help in the road outside. For long there was no answer—only the distant roar of the Downfall and the sweep of the wind. Then a labourer, on the path leading to the Wigsons' farm, heard and ran up.

An hour later a doctor had been got hold of, and Hannah was lying upstairs, tended by Mrs. Wigson and Reuben.

'A paralytic seizure,' said the doctor to Reuben. 'This woman says she's been failing for some time past. She's lived and worked hard, Mr. Grieve; *you* know that. And there's been some shock.'

Reuben explained incoherently. The doctor did not understand, and did not care, being a dull man and comparatively new to the place. He did what he could, said she would recover—oh, yes, she would recover; but, of course, she could never be the same woman again. Her working days were done.

A servant came over from Wigsons' to sit up with Reuben, Mrs. Wigson being too delicate to undertake it. The girl went to lie down first for an hour or two in the room across the landing, and he was left alone in the gaunt room with his wife. Poor quailing soul! As he sat there in the windy darkness, hour after hour, open-mouthed and open-eyed, he was steeped in terror—terror of the future, of its forlornness, of his own feebleness, of death. His heart clave piteously to the unconscious woman beside him, for he had nothing else. It seemed to him that the Lord had indeed dealt hardly with him, thus to strike him down on the day of his great atonement!

CHAPTER IX

No news of the catastrophe at Needham Farm reached the brother and sister in Potter Street. The use of the pen had always been to Reuben one of the main torments and mysteries of life, and he had besides all those primitive instincts of silence and concealment which so often in the peasant nature accompany misfortune. His brain-power, moreover, was absorbed by his own calamity and by the changes in the routine of daily life which his wife's state brought upon him, so that immediately after his great effort of reparation towards them—an effort which had taxed the whole man physically and mentally—his brother's children and their affairs passed for a while strangely and completely from his troubled mind.

Meanwhile, what a transformation he had wrought in their fortunes! When the shock of his parents' story had subsided in

him, and that other shock of jarring temperaments, which the first hour of Louie's companionship had brought with it, had been for the time forgotten again in the stress of plans and practical detail, David felt to the full the exhilaration of his new prospects. He had sprung at a leap, as it seemed to him, from the condition of the boy-adventurer to that of the man of affairs. And as he looked back upon their childhood and realised that all the time, instead of being destitute and dependent orphans, they and their money had really been the mainstay of Hannah and the farm, the lad seemed to cast from him the long humiliation of years, to rise in stature and dignity. That old skinflint and hypocrite, Aunt Hannah! With the usual imperfect sympathy of the young he did not much realise Reuben's struggle. But he bore his uncle no grudge for these years' delay. The contrivances and hardships of his Manchester life had been, after all, enjoyment. Without them and the extravagant self-reliance they had developed in him his pride and ambition would have run less high. And at this moment the nerve and savour of existence came to him from pride and from ambition.

But first of all he had to get his money. As soon as Mr. Gurney's answer to Reuben's letter came, David took train for London, made his way to the great West-End shop which had employed his father, and saw the partner who had taken charge of Sandy's money for so long. Mr. Gurney, a shrewd and pompous person, was interested in seeing Grieve's son, inquired what he was about, ran over the terms of a letter to himself, which he took out of a drawer, and then, with a little flourish as to his own deserts in the matter of the guardianship of the money —a flourish neither unnatural nor unkindly—handed over to the lad both the letter and a cheque on a London bank, took his receipt, talked a little, but with a blunted memory, about the lad's father, gave him a little general business advice, asked whether his sister was still alive, and bade him good morning. Both were satisfied, and the young man left the office with the cheque lying warm in his pocket, looking slowly and curiously round the shop where his father had earned it, as he walked away.

Outside he found himself close to Trafalgar Square, and, striking down to the river, he went to sit on the Embankment and ponder the enclosures which Mr. Gurney had given him. First he took out the cheque, with infinite care, lest the breeze on the Embankment should blow it out of his hand, and spread it on his knee. 600*l.*! As he stared at each letter and flourish his eyes widened anew; and when he looked up across the grey and misty river, the figures still danced before him, and in his exultation he could have shouted the news to the passers-by. Then, when the precious paper had been safely stowed away again, he hesitatingly took out the other—his father's dying memorandum on the subject of his children, so he had understood Mr. Gurney. It was old and brown; it had been written

with anguish, and it could only be deciphered with difficulty. There had been no will properly so called. Sandy had placed more confidence in 'the firm' than in the law, and had left behind him merely the general indication of his wishes in the hands of the partner who had specially befriended him. The provisions of it were as Sandy had described them to Reuben on his death-bed. Especially did the father insist that there should be no artificial restriction of age. 'I wanted money most when I was nineteen, and I could have used it just as well then as I could at any later time.'

So he might have been a rich man at least a year earlier. Well, much as he had loathed Purcell, he was glad, on the whole, that things were as they were. He had been still a great fool, he reflected, a year ago.

Then, as to Louie, the letter ran: 'Let Davy have all the money, and let him manage for her. I won't divide it; he must judge. He may want it all, and it may be best for them both he should have it. He's got a good heart; I know that; he'll not rob his sister. I lay it on him, now I'm dying, to be patient with her, and look after her. She's not like other children. But it's not her fault; it was born in her. Let him see her married to a decent man, and then give her what's honestly hers. That little lad has nursed me like a woman since I've been ill. He was always a good lad to me, and I'd like him to know when he's grown up that his father loved him—'

But here the poor laboured scrawl came to an end, save for a few incoherent strokes. David thrust it back into his pocket. His cheek was red; his eyes burnt; he sat for long, with his elbows on his knees, staring at the February river. The choking, passionate impulse to comfort his father he had felt so often as a child was there again, by association, alive and piteous.

Suddenly he woke up with a start. There, to either hand, lay the bridges, with the moving figures atop and the hurrying river below. And from one of them his mother had leapt when she destroyed herself. In the trance of thought that followed, it was to him as though he felt her wild nature, her lawless blood, stirring within him, and realised, in a fierce, reluctant way, that he was hers as well as his father's. In a sense, he shared Reuben's hatred; for he, best of all, knew what she had made his father suffer. Yet the thought of her drew his restless curiosity after it. Where did she come from? Who were her kindred? From the south of France, Reuben thought. The lad's imagination travelled with difficulty and excitement to the far and alien land whence half his being had sprung. A few scraps of poetry and history recurred to him—a single tattered volume of 'Monte Cristo,' which he had lately bought with an odd lot at a sale—but nothing that suggested to his fancy anything like the peasant farm in the Mont Ventoux, within sight of Arles, where Louise Suveret's penurious childhood had been actually cradled.

Two o'clock struck from the belfry of St. Paul's, looming there

to his left in the great bend of the river. At the sound he shook off all his thoughts. Let him see something of London. He had two hours and a half before his train from Euston. Westminster first—a hasty glance; then an omnibus to St. Paul's, that he might look down upon the city and its rush; then north. He had a map with him, and his quick intelligence told him exactly how to use his time to the best advantage. Years afterwards he was accustomed to look back on this hour spent on the top of an omnibus, which was making its difficult way to the Bank through the crowded afternoon streets, as one of the strong impressions of his youth. Here was one centre of things; Westminster represented another; and both stood for knowledge, wealth, and power. The boy's hot blood rose to the challenge. His foot was on the ladder, and many men with less chances than he had risen to the top. At this moment, small Manchester tradesman that he was, he had the constant presentiment of a wide career.

That night he let himself into his own door somewhere about nine o'clock. What had Louie been doing with herself all day? She was to have her first lesson from Dora Lomax; but she must have been dull since, unless Dora had befriended her.

To his astonishment, as he shut the door he heard voices in the kitchen—Louie and *John.* John, the shy, woman-hating creature, who had received the news of Louie's expected advent in a spirit of mingled irritation and depression—who, after his first startled look at her as she passed through the shop, seemed to David to have fled the sight of her whenever it was possible!

Louie was talking so fast and laughing so much that neither of them had heard David's latchkey, and in his surprise the brother stood still a moment in the dark, looking round the kitchen-door, which stood a little open. Louie was sitting by the fire with some yards of flowered cotton stuff on her knee, at which she was sewing; John was opposite to her on the oak stool, crouched over a box of nails, from which he was laboriously sorting out those of a certain size, apparently at her bidding, for she gave him sharp directions from time to time. But his toil was intermittent, for whenever her sallies were louder or more amusing than usual his hand paused, and he sat staring at her, his small eyes expanding, a sympathetic grin stealing over his mouth.

It seemed to David that she was describing her lover of the winter; he caught her gesture as she illustrated her performance with Jim Wigson—the boxing of the amorous lout's ears in the lane by the Dye-works. Her beautiful curly black hair was combed to-night into a sort of wild halo round her brow and cheeks, and in this arrangement counteracted the one fault of the face—a slightly excessive length from forehead to chin. But the brilliance of the eyes, the redness of the thin lips over the small and perfect teeth, the flush on the olive cheek, the slender neck, the distinction and delicacy of every sweeping line and curve—for the first time even David realised, as he stood

there in the dark, that his sister was an extraordinary beauty. Strange! Her manner and voice had neither natural nor acquired refinement; and yet in the moulding of the head and face there was a dignity and perfection—a touch, as it were, of the grand style—which marked her out in a northern crowd and riveted the northern eye. Was it the trace of another national character, another civilisation, longer descended, less mixed, more deeply graven than ours?

But what was that idiot John doing here?—the young master wanted to know. He coughed loudly and hung up his hat and his stick, to let them hear that he was there. The pair in the kitchen started. Louie sprang up, flung down her work, and ran out to him.

'Well,' said she breathlessly, 'have you got it?'

'Yes.'

She gave a little shriek of excitement.

'Show it then.'

'There's nothing to show but a cheque. It's all right. Is there anything for supper?'

'There's some bread and cheese and cold apple-pie in there,' said Louie, annoyed with him already; then, turning her head over her shoulder, 'Mr. Dalby, I'll trouble you to get them out.'

With awkward alacrity John flew to do her bidding. When the lad had ransacked the cupboard and placed all the viands it contained on the table, he looked at David. That young man, with a pucker in his brow, was standing by the fire with his hands in his pockets, making short answers to Louie's sharp and numerous questions.

'That's all I can find,' said John. 'Shall I run for something?'

'Thanks,' said David, still frowning, and sat him down, 'that 'll do.'

Louie made a face at John behind her brother's back. The assistant slowly flushed a deep red. In this young fellow, with his money buttoned on his breast, both he and Louie for the first time realised the master.

'Well, good night,' he said, hesitating, 'I'm going.'

David jumped up and went with him into the passage.

'Look here,' he said abruptly, 'you and I have got some business to talk to-morrow. I'm not going to keep you slaving here for nothing now that I can afford to pay you.'

'Are you going to turn me off?' said the other hastily.

David laughed. The cloud had all cleared from his brow.

'Don't be such a precious fool!' he said. 'Now be off—and seven sharp. I must go at it like ten horses to-morrow.'

John disappeared into the night, and David went back to his sister. He found her looking red and excited, and sewing energetically.

'Look here!' she said, lifting a threatening eye to him as he entered the room. 'I'm not going to be treated like a baby. If

you don't tell me all about that money, I'll write to Mr. Gurney myself. It's part of it mine, and *I'll know*, so there!'

'I'll tell you everything,' he said quietly, putting a hand into his coat pocket before he sat down to his supper again. 'There's the cheque—and there's our father's letter,—what Mr. Gurney gave me. There was no proper will—this was instead.'

He pretended to eat, but in reality he watched her anxiously as she read it. The result was very much what he had expected. She ran breathlessly through it, then, with a look all flame and fury, she broke out—

'Up*on* my word! So you're going to take it all, and I'm to be beholden to you for every penny. I'd like to see myself!'

'Now look here, Louie,' he said, firmly, pushing back his chair from the table, 'I want to explain things to you. I should like to tell you all about my business, and what I think of doing, and then you can judge for yourself. I'll not rob you or anyone.'

Whereupon with a fierce gesture she caught up her work again, and he fell into long and earnest talk, setting his mind to the task. He explained to her that the arrival of this money—this capital—made just all the difference, that the whole of it would be infinitely more useful to him than the half, and that he proposed to employ it both for her benefit and his own. He had already cleared out the commission agent from the first floor, and moved down the lodgers—a young foreman and his wife—from the attics to the first-floor back. That left the two attics for himself and Louie, and gave him the front first-floor room, the best room in the house, for an extension of stock.

'Why don't you turn those people out altogether?' said Louie, impatiently. 'They pay very little, and you'll be wanting that room soon, very like.'

'Well, I shall get it soon,' said David bluntly; 'but I can't get it now. Mrs. Mason's bad; she going to be confined.'

'Well, I dare say she is!' cried Louie. 'That don't matter; she isn't confined yet.'

David looked at her in amazement. Then his face hardened.

'I'm not going to turn her out, I tell you,' he said, and immediately returned to his statement. Well, there were all sorts of ways in which he might employ his money. He might put up a shed in the back yard, and get a printing-press. He knew of a press and a very decent fount of type, to be had extremely cheap. John was a capital workman, and between them they might reprint some of the scarce local books and pamphlets, which were always sure of a sale. As to his stock, there were endless possibilities. He knew of a collection of rare books on early America, which belonged to a gentleman at Cheadle. He had been negotiating about them for some time. Now he would close at once; from his knowledge of the market the speculation was a certain one. He was also inclined to largely increase his stock of foreign books, especially in the technical and scientific direction. There was a considerable opening, he believed, for such books in Man-

chester; at any rate, he meant to try for it. And as soon as ever he could he should learn German. There was a fellow—a German clerk—who haunted the Parlour, who would teach him in exchange for English lessons.

So, following a happy instinct, he opened to her all his mind, and talked to her as though they were partners in a firm. The event proved that he could have done nothing better. Very early in his exposition she began to put her wits to his, her irritation dropped, and he was presently astonished at the intelligence she showed. Every element almost in the problems discussed was unfamiliar to her, yet after a while a listener coming in might have thought that she too had been Purcell's apprentice, so nimbly had she gathered up the details involved, so quick she was to see David's points and catch his phrases. If there was no moral fellowship between them, judging from to-night, there bade fair to be a comradeship of intelligence.

'There now,' he said, when he had come to the end of his budget, 'you leave your half of the money to me. Mind, I agree it's your half, and I'll do the best I can with it. I'll pay you interest on it for two years, and I'll keep you. Then we'll see. And if you want to improve yourself a bit, instead of going to work at once, I'll pay for teachers. And look here, we'll keep good friends over it.'

His keen eyes softened to a charming, half-melancholy smile. Louie took no notice; she was absorbed in meditation; and at the end of it, she said with a long breath—

'Well, you may have it, and I'll keep an eye on the accounts. But you needn't think I'll sit at home "improving" myself! Not I. I'll do that church-work. That girl gave me a lesson this morning, and I'm going again to-morrow.'

David received the news with satisfaction, remarking heartily that Dora Lomax was a real good sort, and if it weren't for her the Parlour and Daddy would soon be in a fix. He told the story of the Parlour, dwelling on Dora's virtues.

'But she is a crank, though!' said Louie. 'Why, if you make free with her things a bit, or if you call 'em by the wrong names, she'll fly at you! How's anybody to know what they're meant for?'

David laughed, and got up to get some books he was repairing. As he moved away he looked back a moment.

'I say, Louie,' he began, hesitating, 'that fellow John's worked for me like a dozen, and has never taken a farthing from me. Don't you go and make a fool of him.'

A flush passed over Louie's face. She lifted her hand and tucked away some curly ends of long hair that had fallen on her shoulders.

'He's like one of Aunt Hannah's suet rolies,' she said, after a minute, with a gleam of her white teeth. 'Seems as if some one had tied him in a cloth and boiled him that shape.'

Neither of them cared to go to bed. They sat up talking.

David was mending, sorting, and pricing a number of old books he had bought for nothing at a country sale. He knew enough of bookbinding to do the repairing with much skill, showing the same neatness of finger in it that he had shown years ago in the carving of toy boats and water-wheels. Louie went on with her work, which proved to be a curtain for her attic. She meant to have that room nice, and she had been out buying a few things, whereby David understood—as indeed Reuben had said—that she had some savings. Moreover, with regard to certain odd jobs of carpentering, she had already pressed John into her service, which explained his lingering after hours, and his eagerness among the nails. As to the furniture David had bought for her, on which, in the intervals of his busy days, he had spent some time and trouble, and of which he was secretly proud, humble and cheap as it was—she took it for granted. He could not remember that she had said any 'thank you's' since she came.

Still, youth and comradeship were pleasant. The den in which they sat was warm with light and fire, and was their own. Louie's exultation, too, in their change of fortune, which flashed out of her at every turn, was infectious, and presently his spirits rose with hers, and the two lost themselves in the excitement of large schemes and new horizons.

After a time he found himself comparing notes with her as to that far-off crisis of his running away.

'I suppose you heard somehow about Jim Wigson and me?' he asked her, his pulse quickening after all these years.

She nodded with a little grin. He had already noticed, by the way, that she, while still living among the moors, had almost shaken herself free of the Kinder dialect, whereas it had taken quite a year of Manchester life to rub off his own Doric.

'Well, you didn't imagine'—he went on—'I was going to stop after that? I could put a knife between Jim's ribs now when I think of it!'

And, pushing his book away from him, he sat recalling that long past shame, his face, glowing with vindictive memory, framed in his hands.

'I don't see, though, what you sneaked off for like that after all you'd promised me,' she said with energy.

'No, it was hard on you,' he admitted. 'But I couldn't think of any other way out. I was mad with everybody, and just wanted to cut and run. But before I hit on that notion about Tom' (he had just been explaining to her in detail, not at all to her satisfaction, his device for getting regular news of her) 'I used to spend half my time wondering what you'd do. I thought, perhaps, you'd run away too, and that would have been a kettle of fish.'

'I did run away,' she said, her wild eyes sparkling—'twice.'

'Jiminy!' said David with a schoolboy delight, 'let's hear!'

Whereupon she took up her tale and told him a great deal that was still quite unknown to him. She told it in her own way with

characteristic blindnesses and hardnesses, but the truth of it was this. The very day after David's departure she too had run away, in spite of the fact that Hannah was keeping her in something very like imprisonment. She supposed that David had gone to Manchester, and she meant to follow him there. But she had been caught begging the other side of Glossop by a policeman, who was a native of Clough End and knew all about her.

'He made me come along back, but he must have got the mark on his wrist still where I bit him, I should think,' remarked Miss Louie, with a satisfaction untouched apparently by the lapse of time.

The next attempt had been more serious. It was some months afterwards, and by this time she was in despair about David, and had made up her passionate mind that she would never see him again. But she loathed Hannah more and more, and at last, in the middle of a snowy February, the child determined to find her way over the Peak into the wild valley of the Woodlands, and so to Ashopton and Sheffield, in which last town she meant to go to service. But in the effort to cross the plateau of the Peak she very nearly lost her life. Long before she came in sight of the Snake Inn, on the Woodlands side, she sank exhausted in the snow, and, but for some Frimley shepherds who were out after their sheep, she would have drawn her last breath in that grim solitude. They carried her down to Frimley and dropped her at the nearest shelter, which happened to be Margaret Dawson's cottage.

Margaret was then in the first smart of her widowhood. 'Lias was just dead, and she was withering physically and mentally under the heart-hunger of her loss. The arrival of the pallid, half-conscious child—David's sister, with David's eyes—for a time distracted and appeased her. She nursed the poor waif, and sent word to Needham Farm. Reuben came for the girl, and Margaret, partly out of compassion, partly out of a sense of her own decaying strength, bribed her to go back home by the promise of teaching her the silk-weaving.

Louie learnt the trade with surprising quickness, and as she shot up in stature and her fingers gained in cunning and rapidity, Margaret became more bowed, helpless and 'fond,' until at last Louie did everything, brought home the weft and warp, set it up, worked off the 'cuts,' and took them to the warehouse in Clough End to be paid; while Margaret sat in the chimney corner, pining inwardly for 'Lias and dropping deeper day by day into the gulf of age. By this time of course various money arrangements had been made between them, superintended by Margaret's brother, a weaver in the same village who found it necessary to keep a very sharp eye on this girl-apprentice whom Margaret had picked up. Of late Louie had been paying Margaret rent for the loom, together with a certain percentage on the weekly earnings, practically for 'goodwill.' And on this small sum the widow had managed to live and keep her home, while Louie launched

gloriously into new clothes, started a savings-bank book, and snapped her fingers for good and all at Hannah, who put up with her, however, in a sour silence because of Mr. Gurney's cheques.

'And Margaret can't do *anything* for herself now?' asked David. He had followed the story with eagerness. For years the remembrance had rankled in his mind how during his last months at Kinder, when 'Lias was dying, and the old pair were more in want than ever of the small services he had been accustomed to render them, he had forgotten and neglected his friends because he had been absorbed in the excitements of 'conversion,' so that when Tom Mullins had told him in general terms that his sister Louie was supporting both Margaret and herself, the news had soothed a remorse.

'I should just think not!' said Louie in answer to his question. 'She's gone most silly, and she hasn't got the right use of her legs either.'

'Poor old thing!' said David softly, falling into a dream. He was thinking of Margaret in her active, happy days when she used to bake scones for him, or mend his clothes, or rate him for 'worriting' 'Lias. Then wakening up he drew the book he was binding towards him again. 'She must have been precious glad to have you to do for her, Louie,' he said contentedly.

'Do for her?' Louie opened her eyes. 'As if I could be worrited with her! I had my work to do, thank you. There was a niece used to come in and see to her. She used to get in my way dreadful sometimes. She'd have fits of thinking she could work the loom again, and I'd have to keep her away—regular *frighten* her.'

David started.

'Who'll work the loom now?' he asked; his look and tone altering to match hers.

'I'm sure I don't know,' said Louie, carelessly. 'Very like she'll not get anyone. The work's been slack a long while.'

David suddenly drew back from his bookbinding.

'When did you let her know, Louie—about me?' he asked quickly.

'Let her know? Who was to let her know? Your letter came eight o'clock and our train started half-past ten. I'd just time to pitch my things together and that was about all.'

'And you never sent, and you haven't written?'

'You leave me alone,' said the girl, turning instantly sulky under his tone and look. 'It's nowt to you what I do.'

'Why!' he said, his voice shaking, 'she'd be waiting and waiting—and she's got nothing else to depend on.'

'There's her brother,' said Louie angrily, 'and if he won't take her, there's the workhouse. They'll take her there fast enough, and she won't know anything about it.'

'The *workhouse!*' cried David, springing up, incensed past bearing by her callous way. 'Margaret that took you in out of the snow!—you said it yourself. And you—you'd not lift a

finger—not you—you'd not even give her notice—"chuck her into the workhouse—that's good enough for her!" It's *vile*,—that's what it is!'

He stood, choked by his own wrath, eyeing her fiercely—a young thunder god of disdain and condemnation.

Louie too got up—gathering up her work round her—and gave him back his look with interest before she flung out of the room.

'Keep a civil tongue in your head, sir, or I'll let you know,' she cried. 'I'll not be called over the coals by you nor nobody. I'll do what I *please*,—and if you don't like it you can do the other thing—so there—now you know!'

And with a nod of the utmost provocation and defiance she banged the door behind her and went up to bed.

David flung down the pen with which he had been lettering his books on the table, and, drawing a chair up to the fire, he sat moodily staring into the embers. So it was all to begin again—the long wrangle and jar of their childhood. Why had he broken silence and taken this burden once more upon his shoulders? He had a moment of passionate regret. It seemed to him more than he could bear. No gratitude, no kindness; and this fierce tongue!

After a while he fetched pen and paper and began to write on his knee, while his look kindled again. He wrote to Margaret, a letter of boyish effusion and affection, his own conscience quickened to passion by Louie's lack of conscience. He had never forgotten her, he said, and he wished he could see her again. She must write, or get some one to write for her—and tell him what she was going to do now that Louie had left her. He had been angry with Louie for coming away without sending word. But what he wanted to say was this: if Margaret could get no one to work the loom, he, David, would pay her brother four shillings a week, for six months certain, towards her expenses if he would take her in and look after her. She must ask somebody to write at once and say what was to be done. If her brother consented to take her, David would send a post-office order for the first month at once. He was doing well in his business, and there would be no doubt about the payments.

He made his proposal with a haste and impulsiveness very unlike the cool judgment he had so far shown in his business. It never occurred to him to negotiate with the brother who might be quite well able to maintain his sister without help. Besides he remembered him as a hard man of whom both Margaret and 'Lias—soft, sensitive creatures—were both more or less afraid. No, there should be no doubt about it—not a day's doubt, if he could help it! He could help, and he would; and if they asked him more he would give it. Nearly midnight! But if he ran out to the General Post Office it would be in time.

When he had posted it and was walking home, his anger was all gone. But in its stead was the smart of a baffled instinct—the

hunger for sympathy, for love, for that common everyday life of the affections which had never been his, while it came so easily to other people.

In his chafing distress he felt the curb of something unknown before; or, rather, what had of late taken the pleasant guise of kinship and natural affection assumed to-night another and a sterner aspect, and in this strait of conduct, that sheer 'imperative' which we carry within us made itself for the first time heard and realised.

'I have done my duty and must abide by it. I *must* bear with her and look after her.'

Why?

'Because my father laid it on me?'—

And because there is a life within our life which urges and presses?—because we are 'not our own'? But this is an answer which implies a whole theology. And at this moment of his life David had not a particle or shred of theology about him. Except, indeed, that, like Voltaire, he was graciously inclined to think a First Cause probable.

Next day this storm blew over, as storms do. Louie came down early and made the porridge for breakfast. When David appeared she carried things off with a high hand, and behaved as if nothing had happened; but anyone accustomed to watch her would have seen a certain quick nervousness in her black, wild bird's eyes. As for David, after a period of gruffness and silence, he passed by degrees into his usual manner. Louie spent the day with Dora, and he went off to Cheadle to conclude the purchase of that collection of American books he had described to Louie. But first, on his way, he walked proudly into Heywood's bank and opened an account there, receiving the congratulations of an old and talkative cashier, who already knew the lad and was interested in his prospects, with the coolness of one who takes good fortune as his right.

In the afternoon he was busy in the shop—not too busy, however, to notice John. What ailed the lad? While he was inside, as soon as the door did but creak in the wind he sprang to open it, but for the most part he preferred to stand outside watching the stall and the street. When Louie appeared about five o'clock—for her hours with Dora were not yet regular—he forthwith became her slave. She set him to draw up the fire while she got the tea, and then, without taking any notice of David, she marched John upstairs to help her hang her curtains, lay her carpet, and nail up the coloured fashion plates and newspaper prints of royalties or beauties with which she was adorning the bare walls of the attic.

When all her additions had been made to David's original stock; when the little deal dressing-table and glass had been draped in the cheapest of muslins over the pinkest of calicoes; when the flowery curtains had been tied back with blue ribbons;

when the china vases on the mantelpiece had been filled with nodding plumes of dyed grasses, mostly of a rosy red; and a long glass in a somewhat damaged condition, but still presenting enough surface to enable Miss Louie to study herself therein from top to toe, had been propped against the wall; there was and could be nothing in the neighbourhood of Potter Street, so John reflected, as he furtively looked about him, to vie with the splendours of Miss Grieve's apartment. There was about it a sensuousness, a deliberate quest of luxury and gaiety, which a raw son of poverty could feel though he could not put it into words. No Manchester girl he had ever seen would have cared to spend her money in just this way.

'Now that's real nice, Mr. Dalby, and I'm just obliged to you,' said Louie, with patronising emphasis, as she looked round upon his labours. 'I do like to get a man to do things for you—he's got some strength in him—not like a gell!'

And she looked down at herself and at the long, thin-fingered hand against her dress, with affected contempt. John looked at her too, but turned his head away again quickly.

'And yet you're pretty strong too, Miss,' he ventured.

'Well, perhaps I am,' she admitted; 'and a good thing too, when you come to think of the rough time I had over there'—and she jerked her head behind her—'ever since Davy ran away from me.'

'Ran away from you, Miss?'

She nodded, pressing her lips together with the look of one who keeps a secret from the highest motives. But she brought two beautiful plaintive eyes to bear on John, and he at once felt sure that David's conduct had been totally inexcusable.

Then suddenly she broke into a laugh. She was sitting on the edge of the bed, swinging her feet lightly backwards and forwards.

'Look here!' she said, dropping her voice, and looking round at the door. 'Do you know a lot about Davy's affairs?—you 're a great friend of his, aren't you?'

'I s'pose so,' said the lad, awkwardly.

'Well, has he been making up to anybody that you know of?'

John's invisible eyebrows stretched considerably. He was so astonished that he did not readily find an answer.

'Why, of course, I mean,' said Louie, impatiently, 'is he *in love* with anybody?'

'Not that I know of, Miss.'

'Well, then, there's somebody in love with *him*,' said Louie, maliciously; 'and some day, Mr. Dalby, if we get a chance, perhaps I'll tell you all about it.'

The charming confidential smile she threw him so bewildered the lad that he hardly knew where he was.

But an exasperated shout of 'John' from the stairs recalled him, and he rushed downstairs to help David deal with a cargo of books just arrived.

That evening David ran up to the Parlour for half an hour, to have a talk with Daddy and find out what Dora thought of Louie. He had sent a message by Louie about Reuben's revelations, and it occurred to him that since Daddy had not been to look him up since, that incalculable person might be offended that he had not brought his great news in person. Besides, he had a very strong curiosity to know what had happened after all to Lucy Purcell, and whether anything had been commonly observed of Purcell's demeanour under the checkmate administered to him. For the past few days he had been wholly absorbed in his own affairs, and during the previous week he had seen nothing of either Daddy or Dora, except that at a casual meeting in the street with Daddy that worthy had described his attack on Purcell with a gusto worthy of his Irish extraction.

He found the restaurant just shutting, and Daddy apparently on the wing for the 'White Horse' parlour, to judge from the relief which showed in Dora's worn look as she saw her father lay down his hat and stick again and fall 'chaffing' with David.

For, with regard to David's change of position, the landlord of the Parlour was in a very testy frame of mind.

'Six hundred pounds!' he growled, when the young fellow sitting cross-legged by the fire had made an end of describing to them both his journey to London. 'H'm, *your* fun's over: any fool can do on six hundred pounds!'

'Thank you, Daddy,' said the lad, with a sarcastic lip. 'As for you, I wonder *you* have the face to talk! Who's coining money here, I should like to know?'

Dora looked up with a start. Her father met her look with a certain hostility and an obstinate shake of his thin shoulders.

'Davy, me boy, you're that consated by now, you'll not be for taking advice. But I'll give it you, bedad, to take or to leave! Never pitch your tent, sir, where you can't strike it when you want to! But there's where your beastly money comes in. Nobody need look to you now for any comprehension of the finer sentiments of man.'

'What do you mean, Daddy?'

'Never you mind,' said the old vagrant, staring sombrely at the floor—the spleen in person. 'Only I want my *freedom*, I tell you—and a bit of air, sometimes—and by gad I'll have 'em!'

And throwing back his grey head with a jerk he fixed an angry eye on Dora. Dora had grown paler, but she said nothing; her fingers went steadily on with her work; from early morning now till late night neither they nor she were ever at rest. After a minute's silence Lomax walked to the door, flung a good-night behind him and disappeared.

Dora hastily drew her hand across her eyes, then threaded her needle as though nothing had happened. But David was perplexed and sorry. How white and thin she looked, to be sure! That old lunatic must be worrying her somehow.

He moved his chair nearer to Dora.

'Is there anything wrong, Miss Dora?' he asked her, dropping his voice.

She looked up with a quick gratitude, his voice and expression putting a new life into her.

'Oh! I don't know,' she said, gently and sadly. 'Father's been very restless these last few weeks. I can't keep him at home. And I'm not always dull like this. I've done my best to cheer him up. And I don't think there's much amiss with the Parlour—yet—only the outgoings are so large every day. I'm always feeart—'

She paused, and a visible tremor ran through her. David's quick eye understood the signs of strain and fatigue, and he felt a brotherly pity for her—a softer, more normal feeling than Louie had ever called out in him.

'I say,' he said heartily, 'if there's anything I can do, you'll let me know, won't you?'

She smiled at him, and then turned to her work again in a hurry, afraid of her own eyes and lips, and what they might be saying.

'Oh! I dare say I fret myself too much,' she said, with the tone of one determined to be cheered. And, by way of protecting her own quivering heart, she fell upon the subject of Louie. She showed the brother some of Louie's first attempts—some of the stitches she had been learning.

'She's that quick!' she said. wondering. 'In a few days I'm going to trust her with that,' and she pointed to a fine old piece of Venetian embroidery, which had to be largely repaired before it could be made up into an altar-cloth and presented to St. Damian's by a rich and devoted member of the congregation.

'Does she get in your way?' the brother inquired.

'N–o,' she said in a low voice, paying particular attention to a complicated stitch. 'She'll get used to me and the work soon. She'll make a first-rate hand if she's patient a bit. They'll be glad to take her on at the shop.'

'But you'll not turn her out? You'll let her work here, alongside of you?' said the young man eagerly. He had just met Louie, in the dark, walking up Market Street with a seedy kind of gentleman, who he had reason to know was a bad lot. John was off his head about her, and no longer of much use to anybody, and in these few days other men, as it seemed to him, had begun to hang about. The difficulties of his guardianship were thickening upon him, and he clung to Dora's help.

'No; I'll not turn her out. She may work here if she wants to,' said Dora, with the same slowness.

And all the time she was saying to herself passionately that, if Louie Grieve had not been his sister, she should *never* have set foot in that room again! In the two days they had been together Louie had outraged almost every feeling the other possessed. And there was a burning dread in Dora's mind that even the secret of her heart of hearts had been somehow discovered by the girl's

hawk-like sense. But she had promised to help him, and she would.

'You must let me know what I owe you for teaching her and introducing her,' said David firmly. 'Yes, you must, Miss Dora. It's business, and you mustn't make any bones about it. A girl doesn't learn a trade and get an opening found her for nothing.'

'Oh no, nonsense!' she said quickly, but with decision equal to his own. 'I won't take anything. She don't want much teaching; she's so clever; she sees a thing almost before the words are out of your mouth. Look here, Mr. Grieve, I want to tell you about Lucy.'

She looked up at him, flushing. He, too, coloured.

'Well,' he said; 'that's what I wanted to ask you.'

She told him the whole story of Lucy's flight from her father, of her illness and departure, of the probable stepmother.

'Old brute!' said David between his teeth. 'I say, Miss Dora, can nothing be done to make him treat her decently?'

His countenance glowed with indignation and disgust. Dora shook her head sadly.

'I don't see what anyone can do; and the worst of it is she'll be such a long while getting over it. I've had a letter from her this morning, and she says the Hastings doctor declares she must stay there a year in the warm and not come home at all, or she'll be going off in a decline. I know Lucy gets nervous about herself, but it do seem bad.'

David sat silent, lost in a medley of feelings, most of them unpleasant. Now that Lucy Purcell was at the other end of England, both her service to him and his own curmudgeon behaviour to her loomed doubly large.

'I say, will you give me her address?' he said at last. 'I've got a smart book I've had bound for her. I'd like to send it her.'

Dora went to the table and wrote it for him. Then he got up to go.

'Upon my word, you do look tired,' he broke out. 'Can't you go to bed? It is hard lines.'

Which last words applied to that whole situation of hers with her father which he was beginning dimly to discern. In his boyish admiration and compassion he took both her hands in his. Dora withdrew them quickly.

'Oh, I'll pull through!' she said, simply, and he went.

When she had closed the door after him she stood looking at the clock with her hands clasped in front of her.

'How much longer will father be?' she said, sighing. 'Oh, I think I told him all Lucy wanted me to say; I think I did.'

CHAPTER X

THREE or four months passed away. During that period David had built up a shed in his back yard and had established a printing-press there, with a respectable, though not extensive, fount

of type—bought, all of it, secondhand, and a bargain. John and he spent every available moment there, and during their first experiments would often sit up half the night working off the sheets of their earliest productions, in an excitement which took no count of fatigue. They began with reprinting some scarce local tracts, with which they did well. Then David diverged into a Radical pamphlet or two on the subject of the coming Education Bill, finding authors for them among the leading ministers of the town; and these timely wares, being freely pushed on the stall, on the whole paid their expenses, with a little profit to spare—the labour being reckoned at nothing. And now David was beginning to cherish the dream of a new history of Manchester, for which among his own collections he already possessed a great deal of fresh material. But that would take time and money. He must push his business a bit further first.

That business, however, was developing quite as rapidly as the two pairs of arms could keep pace with it. Almost everything the young fellow touched succeeded. He had instinct, knowledge, a growing tact, and an indomitable energy, and these are the qualities which make, which are in themselves, success. The purchase of the collection at Cheadle, bearing on the early history of American states and towns, not only turned out well in itself, but brought him to the notice of a big man in London, who set the clever and daring beginner on several large quests both in Lancashire and Yorkshire by which both profited considerably. In another direction he was extending his stock of foreign scientific and technical books, especially such as bore upon the industries of Northern England. Old Barbier, who took a warmer and warmer interest in his pupil's progress, kept him constantly advised as to French books through old friends of his own in Paris, who were glad to do the exile a kindness.

'But why not run over to Paris for yourself, form some connections, and look about you?' suggested Barbier.

Why not, indeed? The young man's blood, quick with curiosity and adventure, under all his tradesman's exterior, leapt at the thought. But prudence restrained him for the present.

As for German books, he was struggling with the language, and feeling his way besides through innumerable catalogues. How he found time for all the miscellaneous acquisitions of these months it would be difficult to say. But whether in his free times or in trade-hours he was hardly ever without a book or a catalogue beside him, save when he was working the printing press; and, although his youth would every now and then break out against the confinement he imposed upon it, and drive him either to long tramps over the moors on days when the spring stirred in the air, or to a spell of theatre-going, in which Louie greedily shared, yet, on the whole, his force of purpose was amazing, and the success which it brought with it could only be regarded as natural and inevitable. He was beginning to be well known to the old-established men in his own business, who could

not but show at times some natural jealousy of so quick a rise. The story of his relations to Purcell spread, and the two were watched with malicious interest at many a book-sale, when the nonchalant self-reliance and prosperous look of the younger drove the elder man again and again into futile attempts to injure and circumvent him. It was noticed that never till now had Purcell lost his head with a rival.

Nevertheless, the lad had far fewer enemies than might have been expected. His manner had always been radiantly self-confident; but there was about him a conspicuous element of quick feeling, of warm humanity, which grew rather than diminished with his success. He was frank, too, and did not try to gloss over a mistake or a failure. Perhaps in his lordly way he felt he could afford himself a few now and then, he was so much cleverer than his neighbours.

Upon no one did David's development produce more effect than upon Mr. Ancrum. The lame, solitary minister, who only got through his week's self-appointed tasks at a constant expense of bodily torment, was dazzled and bewildered by the spectacle of so much vitality spent with such ease and impunity.

'How many years of Manchester must one give him?' said Ancrum to himself one night, when he was making his way home from a reading of the 'Electra' with David. 'That six hundred pounds has quickened the pace amazingly! Ten years, perhaps. Then London, and anything you like. Bookselling slips into publishing, and publishing takes a man into another class, and within reach of a hundred new possibilities. Some day I shall be bragging of having taught him! *Taught* him! He'll be turning the tables on me precious soon. Caught me out twice to-night, and got through the tough bit of the chorus much better than I did. How does he do it?—and with that mountain of other things on his shoulders! There's *one* speck in the fruit, however, as far as I can see—Miss Louie!'

From the first moment of his introduction to her, Ancrum had taken particular notice of David's handsome sister, who, on her side, had treated her old minister and teacher with a most thoroughgoing indifference. He saw that now, after some three months of life together, the brother and sister had developed separate existences, which touched in two points only—a common liking for Dora Lomax, and a common keenness for business.

Here, in this matter of business, they were really at one. David kept nothing from her, and consulted her a good deal. She had the same shrewd head that he had, and as it was her money as well as his that was in question she was determined to know and to understand what he was after. Anybody who had come upon the pair on the nights when they made up their accounts, their dark heads touching under the lamp, might have gone away moralising on the charms of fraternal affection.

And all the while David had once more tacitly given up the attempt either to love her or to control her. How indeed could

he control her? He was barely two years older, and she had a will of iron. She made disreputable friends whom he loathed the sight of. But all he could do was to keep them out of the house. She led John by this time a dog's life. From the temptress she had become the tease and tyrant, and the clumsy fellow, consumed with feverish passion, slaved for her whenever she was near him with hardly the reward of a kind look or a civil word in a fortnight. David set his teeth and tried to recover possession of his friend. And as long as they two were at the press or in the shop together alone, John was often his old self, and would laugh out in the old way. But no sooner did Louie appear than he followed her about like an animal, and David could make no more of him. Whenever any dispute, too, arose between the brother and sister, he took her part, whatever it might be, with an acrimony which pushed David's temper hard.

Yet, on the whole, so Ancrum thought, the brother showed a wonderful patience. He was evidently haunted by a sense of responsibility towards his sister, and, at the same time, both tormented and humiliated by his incompetence to manage or influence her. It was curious, too, to watch how by antagonism and by the constant friction of their life together, certain qualities in her developed certain others in him. Her callousness, for instance, did but nurture a sensitive humanity in him. She treated the lodgers in the first pair back with persistent indifference and even brutality, seeing that Mrs. Mason was a young, helpless creature approaching every day nearer to a confinement she regarded with terror, and that a little common kindness from the only other woman in the house could have softened her lot considerably. But David's books were stacked about in awkward and inconvenient places waiting for the Masons' departure, and Louie had no patience with them—with the wife at any rate. It once or twice occurred to David that if the husband, a good-looking fellow and a very hard-worked shopman, had had more hours at home, Louie would have tried her blandishments upon him.

He on his side was goaded by Louie's behaviour into an unusual complaisance and liberality towards his tenants. Louie once contemptuously told him he would make a capital 'general help.' He was Mrs. Mason's coal-carrier and errand-boy already.

In the same way Louie beat and ill-treated a half-starved collie—one of the short-haired black sort familiar to the shepherd of the north, and to David himself in his farm days—which would haunt the shop and kitchen. Whereupon David felt all his heart melt towards the squalid, unhandsome creature. He fed and cherished it; it slept on his bed by night and followed him by day, he all the while protecting it from Louie with a strong hand. And the more evil was the eye she cast upon the dog, who, according to her, possessed all the canine vices, the more David loved it, and the more Tim was fattened and caressed.

In another direction, too, the same antagonism appeared.

The sister's license of speech and behaviour towards the men who became her acquaintances provoked in the brother what often seemed to Ancrum—who, of course, remembered Reuben, and had heard many tales of old James Grieve, the lad's grandfather—a sort of Puritan reaction, the reaction of his race and stock against 'lewdness.' Louie's complete independence, however, and the distance she preserved between his amusements and hers, left David no other weapon than sarcasm, which he employed freely. His fine sensitive mouth took during these weeks a curve half mocking, half bitter, which changed the whole expression of the face.

He saw, indeed, with great clearness after a month or so that Louie's wildness was by no means the wildness of an ignorant innocent, likely to slip unawares into perdition, and that, while she had a passionate greed for amusement and pleasure, and a blank absence of principle, she was still perfectly alive to the risks of life, and meant somehow both to enjoy herself and to steer herself through. But this gradual perception—that, in spite of her mode of killing spare time, she was not immediately likely to take any fatal false step, as he had imagined in his first dread—did but increase his inward repulsion.

A state of feeling which was the more remarkable because he himself, in Ancrum's eyes, was at the moment in a temper of moral relaxation and bewilderment! His absorption in George Sand, and through her in all the other French Romantics whose books he could either find for himself or borrow from Barbier, was carrying a ferment of passion and imagination through all his blood. Most social arrangements, including marriage, seemed to have become open questions to him. Why, then, this tone towards Louie and her friends? Was it that, apart from the influence of heredity, the young fellow's moral perception at this time was not ethical at all, but æsthetic—a matter of taste, of the presence or absence of certain ideal and poetic elements in conduct?

At any rate his friendship for old Barbier drew closer and closer, and Ancrum, who had begun to feel a lively affection for him, could see but little of him.

As to Barbier, it was a significant chance which had thrown him across David's path. In former days this lively Frenchman had been a small Paris journalist, whom the *coup d'état* had struck down with his betters, and who had escaped to England with one suit of clothes and eight francs in his pocket. He reminded himself on landing of a cousin of his mother's settled as a clerk in Manchester, found his way northwards, and had now, for some seventeen years, been maintaining himself in the cotton capital, mainly by teaching, but partly by a number of small arts—ornamental calligraphy, *menu*-writing, and the like—too odd and various for description. He was a fanatic, a Red, much possessed by political hatreds which gave savour to an existence otherwise dull and peaceable enough. Religious beliefs were

very scarce with him, but he had a certain literary creed, the creed of 1830, when he had been a scribbler in the train of Victor Hugo, which he did his best to put into David.

He was a formidable-looking person, six feet in height, and broad in proportion, with bushy white eyebrows, and a mouth made hideous by two projecting teeth. In speech he hated England and all her ways, and was for ever yearning towards the misguided and yet unequalled country which had cast him out. In heart he was perfectly aware that England is free as not even Republican France is free; and he was also sufficiently alive to the fact that he had made himself a very tolerable niche in Manchester, and was pleasantly regarded there—at least, in certain circles—as an oracle of French opinion, a commodity which, in a great commercial centre, may at any time have a cash value. He could, in truth, have long ago revisited *la patrie* had he had a mind, for governments are seldom vindictive in the case of people who can clearly do them no harm. This, however, was not at all his own honest view of the matter. In the mirror of the mind he saw himself perpetually draped in the pathos of exile and the dignity of persecution, and the phrases by which he was wont to impress this inward vision on the brutal English sense had become, in the course of years, an effective and touching habit with him.

David had been Barbier's pupil in the first instance at one of the classes of the Mechanics' Institute. Never in Barbier's memory had any Manchester lad so applied himself to learn French before. And when the boy's knowledge of the Encyclopædists came out, and he one day put the master right in class on some points connected with Diderot's relations to Rousseau, the ex-journalist gaped with astonishment, and then went home and read up his facts, half enraged and half enraptured. David's zeal piqued him, made him a better Frenchman and a better teacher than he had been for years. He was a vain man, and David's capacities put him on his mettle.

Very soon he and the lad had become intimate. He had described to David the first night of *Hernani*, when he had been one of the long-haired band of *rapins*, who came down in their scores to the Théâtre Francais to defend their chief, Hugo, against the hisses of the Philistine. The two were making coffee in Barbier's attic, at the top of a side street off the Oxford Road, when these memories seized upon the old Romantic. He took up the empty coffee-pot, and brandished it from side to side as though it had been the sword of Hernani; the miserable Academy hugging its Molière and Racine fled before him; the world was once more regenerate, and Hugo its high priest. Passages from the different parts welled to his old lips; he gave the play over again—the scene between the lover and the husband, where the husband lays down the strange and sinister penalty to which the lover submits—the exquisite love-scene in the fifth act—and the cry of agonised passion with which Doña Sol defends her love

against his executioner. All these things he declaimed, stumping up and down, till the terrified landlady rose out of her bed to remonstrate, and got the door locked in her face for her pains, and till the *bourgeois* baby in the next room woke up and roared, and so put an abrupt end to the performance. Old Barbier sat down swearing, poked the fire furiously, and then, taking out a huge red handkerchief, wiped his brow with a trembling hand. His stiff white hair, parted on either temple, bristled like a high *toupie* over his round, black eyes, which glowed behind his spectacles. And meanwhile the handsome boy sat opposite, glad to laugh by way of reaction, but at bottom stirred by the same emotion, and ready to share in the same adorations.

Gradually David learnt his way about this bygone world of Barbier's recollection. A vivid picture sprang up in him of these strange leaders of a strange band, these cadaverous poets and artists of Louis Philippe's early days,—beings in love with Lord Byron and suicide, having Art for God, and Hugo for prophet, talking of were-wolves, vampires, cathedrals, sunrises, forests, passion and despair, hatted like brigands, cloaked after Vandyke, curled like Absalom, making new laws unto themselves in verse as in morals, and leaving all petty talk of duty or common sense to the Academy and the nursery.

George Sand walking the Paris quays in male dress—George Sand at Fontainebleau roaming the midnight forest with Alfred de Musset, or wintering with her dying musician among the mountains of Palma; Gérard de Nerval, wanderer, poet, and suicide; Alfred de Musset flaming into verse at dead of night amid an answering and spendthrift blaze of wax candles; Baudelaire's blasphemies and eccentricities—these characters and incidents Barbier wove into endless highly coloured tales, to which David listened with perpetual relish.

'*Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!* What times! What memories!' the old Frenchman would cry at last, fairly re-transported to the world of his youth, and, springing up, he would run to the little cupboard by his bed head, where he kept a score or so of little paper volumes—volumes which the tradesman David soon discovered, from a curious study of French catalogues, to have a fast-rising money value—and out would come Alfred de Musset's 'Nuit de Mai,' or an outrageous verse from Baudelaire, or an harmonious nothing from Gautier. David gradually learnt to follow, to understand, to range all that he heard in a mental setting of his own. The France of his imagination indeed was a strange land! Everybody in it was either girding at priests like Voltaire, or dying for love like George Sand's Sténio.

But whether the picture was true to life or no, it had a very strongly marked effect on the person conceiving it. Just as the speculative complexion of his first youth had been decided by the chance which brought him into daily contact with the French eighteenth century—for no self-taught solitary boy of quick and covetous mind can read Voltaire continuously without bearing the

marks of him henceforward—so in the same way, when he passed, as France had done before him, from the philosophers to the Romantics, this constant preoccupation with the French literature of passion in its romantic and idealist period left deep and lasting results.

The strongest of these results lay in the realm of moral and social sense. What struck the lad's raw mind with more and more force as he gathered his French books about him was the profound gulf which seemed to divide the average French conception of the relation between the sexes from the average English one. In the French novels he read every young man had his mistress; every married woman her lover. Tragedy frequently arose out of these relations, but that the relations must and did obtain, as a matter of course, was assumed. For the delightful heroes and heroines of a whole range of fiction, from 'Manon Lescaut' down to Murger's 'Vie de Bohème,' marriage did not apparently exist, even as a matter of argument. And as to the duties of the married woman, when she passed on to the canvas, the code was equally simple. The husband might kill his wife's lover—that was in the game; but the young man's right to be was as good as his own. '*No human being can control love, and no one is to blame either for feeling it or for losing it. What alone degrades a woman is falsehood.*' So says the husband in George Sand's 'Jacques' when he is just about to fling himself down an Alpine precipice that his wife and Octave may have their way undisturbed. And all the time, what poetry and passion in the presentation of these things! Beside them the mere remembrance of English ignorance, prudishness, and conventionality would set the lad swelling, as he read, with a sense of superior scorn, and of wild sympathy for a world in which love and not law, truth and not legal fiction, were masters of human relations.

Some little time after Reuben's visit to him he one day told Barbier the fact of his French descent. Barbier declared that he had always known it, had always realised something in David distinct from the sluggish huckstering English temper. Why, David's mother was from the south of France; his own family came from Carcassonne. No doubt the rich Gascon blood ran in both their veins. *Salut au compatriote!*

Thenceforward there was a greater solidarity between the two than ever. Barbier fell into an incessant gossip of Paris—the Paris of Louis Philippe—reviving memories and ways of speech which had been long dead in him, and leaving on David's mind the impression of a place where life was from morning till night amusement, exhilaration, and seduction; where, under the bright smokeless sky, and amid the stateliest streets and public buildings in Europe, men were always witty and women always attractive.

Meanwhile the course of business during the spring months and the rise of his trade in foreign books rapidly brought the scheme of a visit to France, which had been at first a mere dream and fancy, within the region of practical possibility, and even

advantage, for the young bookseller. Two things he was set on. If he went he was determined to go under such conditions as would enable him to see French life—especially French artistic and student life—from the inside. And he saw with some clearness that he would have to take his sister with him.

Against the latter notion Barbier protested vehemently.

'What do you want to tie yourself to a petticoat for? If you take the girl you will have to look after her. Paris, my boy, let me inform you, is not the best place in the world for *la jeune personne;* and the Paris *rapin* may be an amusing scoundrel, but don't trust him with young women if you can help it. Leave Mademoiselle Louie at home, and let her mind the shop. Get Mademoiselle Dora or some one to stay with her, or send her to Mademoiselle Dora.'

So said the Frenchman with sharp dictatorial emphasis. What a preposterous suggestion!

'I can't stop her coming,' said David, quietly—'if she wants to come—and she'll be sure to want. Besides, I'll not leave her alone at home, and she'll not let me send her anywhere—you may be sure of that.'

The Frenchman stared and stormed. David fell silent. Louie was what she was, and it was no use discussing her. At last Barbier, being after all tolerably well acquainted with the lad's relations to his sister, came to a sudden end of his rhetoric, and began to think out something practicable.

That evening he wrote to a nephew of his living as an artist in the Quartier Montmartre. Some months before Barbier's vanity had been flattered by an adroit letter from this young gentleman, written, if the truth were known, at a moment when a pecuniary situation, pinched almost beyond endurance, had made it seem worth while to get his uncle's address out of his widowed mother. Barbier, a bachelor, and a man of some small savings, perfectly understood why he had been approached, and had been none the less extraordinarily glad to hear from the youth. He was a *rapin?* well and good; all the great men had been *rapins* before him. Very likely he had the *rapin's* characteristic vices and distractions. All the world knew what the life meant for nine men out of ten. What was the use of preaching? Youth was youth. Clearly the old man—himself irreproachable—would have been disappointed not to find his nephew a sad dog on personal acquaintance.

'Tell me, Xavier,' his letter ran, 'how to put a young friend of mine in the way of seeing something of Paris and Paris life, more than your fool of a tourist generally sees. He is a bookseller, and will, of course, mind his trade; but he is a young man of taste and intelligence besides, and moreover half French. It would be a pity that he should visit Paris as any *sacré* British Philistine does. Advise me where to place him. He would like to see something of your artist's life. But mind this, young man, he brings a sister with him as handsome as the devil, and not

much easier to manage: so if you do advise—no tricks—tell me of something *convenable.*'

A few days later Barbier appeared in Potter Street just after David had put up the shutters, announcing that he had a proposal to make.

David unlocked the shop-door and let him in. Barbier looked round with some amazement on the small stuffy place, piled to bursting by now with books of every kind, which only John's herculean efforts could keep in passable order.

'Why don't you house yourself better—*hein?*' said the Frenchman. 'A business growing like this, and nothing but a den to handle it in!'

'I shall be all right when I get my other room,' said David composedly. 'Couldn't turn out the lodger before. The woman was only confined last week.'

And as he spoke the wailing of an infant and a skurrying of feet were heard upstairs.

'So it seems,' said Barbier, adjusting his spectacles in bewilderment. '*Jésus!* What an affair! What did you permit it for? Why didn't you turn her out in time?'

'I would have turned myself out first,' said David. He was lounging, with his hands in his pockets, against the books; but though his attitude was nonchalant, his tone had a vibrating energy.

'Barbier!'

'Yes.'

'What do women suffer for like that?'

The young man's eyes glowed, and his lips twitched a little, as though some poignant remembrance were at his heart.

Barbier looked at him with some curiosity.

'Ask *le bon Dieu* and Mother Eve, my friend. It lies between them,' said the old scoffer, with a shrug.

David looked away in silence. On his quick mind, greedy of all human experience, the night of Mrs. Mason's confinement, with its sounds of anguish penetrating through all the upper rooms of the thin, ill-built house, had left an ineffaceable impression of awe and terror. In the morning, when all was safely over, he came down to the kitchen to find the husband—a man some two or three years older than himself, and the smart foreman of an ironmongery shop in Deansgate—crouching over a bit of fire. The man was too much excited to apologise for his presence in the Grieves' room. David shyly asked him a question about his wife.

'Oh, it's all right, the doctor says. There's the nurse with her, and your sister's got the baby. She'll do; but, oh, my God! it's awful—*it's awful!* My poor Liz! Give me a corner here, will you! I'm all upset like.'

David had got some food out of the cupboard, made him eat it, and chatted to him till the man was more himself again. But

the crying of the new-born child overhead, together with the shaken condition of this clever, self-reliant young fellow, so near his own age, seemed for the moment to introduce the lad to new and unknown regions of human feeling.

While these images were pursuing each other through David's mind, Barbier was poking among his foreign books, which lay, backs upwards, on the floor to one side of the counter.

'Do you sell them—*hein?*' he said, looking up and pointing to them with his stick.

'Yes. Especially the scientific books. These are an order. So is that batch. Napoleon III.'s "Cæsar," isn't it? And those over there are "on spec." Oh, I could do something if I knew more! There's a man over at Oldham. One of the biggest weaving-sheds—cotton velvets—that kind of thing. He's awfully rich, and he's got a French library; a big one, I believe. He came in here yesterday. I think I could make something out of him; but he wants all sorts of rum things—last-century memoirs, out-of-the-way ones—everything about Montaigne—first editions—Lord knows what! I say, Barbier, I dare say he'd buy your books. What 'll you let me have them for?'

'*Diantre!* Not for your heart's blood, my young man. It 's like your impudence to ask. You could sell more if you knew more, you think? Well now listen to me.'

The Frenchman sat down, adjusted his spectacles, and, taking a letter from his pocket, read it with deliberation.

It was from the nephew, Xavier Dubois, in answer to his uncle's inquiries. Nothing, the writer declared, could have been more opportune. He himself was just off to Belgium, where a friend had procured him a piece of work on a new Government building. Why should not his uncle's friends inhabit his rooms during his absence? He must keep them on, and would find it very convenient, that being so, that some one should pay the rent. There was his studio, which was bare, no doubt, but quite habitable, and a little *cabinet de toilette*, adjoining, and shut off, containing a bed and all necessaries. Why should not the sister take the bedroom, and let the brother camp somehow in the studio? He could no doubt borrow a bed from some friend before they came, and with a large screen, which was one of the 'studio properties,' a very tolerable sleeping room could be improvised, and still leave a good deal of the studio free. He understood that his uncle's friends were not looking for luxury. But *le stricte nécessaire* he could provide.

Meanwhile the Englishman and his sister would find themselves at once in the artists' circle, and might see as much or as little as they liked of artistic life. He (Dubois) could of course give them introductions. There was a sculptor, for instance, on the ground floor, a man of phenomenal genius, *joli garçon* besides, who would certainly show himself *aimable* for anybody introduced by Dubois; and on the floor above there was a landscape painter, *ancien prix de Rome*, and his wife, who would also, no doubt,

make themselves agreeable, and to whom the brother and sister might go for all necessary information—Dubois would see to that. Sixty francs a month paid the *appartement;* a trifle for service if you desired it—there was, however, no compulsion—to the *concierge* would make you comfortable; and as for your food, the Quartier Montmartre abounded in cheap restaurants, and you might live as you pleased for one franc a day or twenty. He suggested that on the whole no better opening was likely to be found by two young persons of spirit, anxious to see Paris from the inside.

'Now then,' said Barbier, taking off his spectacles with an authoritative click, as he shut up the letter, '*décide-toi.* Go!—and look about you for a fortnight. Improve your French; get to know some of the Paris bookmen; take some commissions out with you—buy there to the best advantage, and come back twenty per cent. better informed than when you set out.'

He smote his hands upon his knees with energy. He had a love of management and contrivance; and the payment of Eugène's rent for him during his absence weighed with his frugal mind.

David stood twisting his mouth in silence a moment, his head thrown back against the books.

'Well, I don't see why not,' he said at last, his eyes sparkling.

'And take notice, my friend,' said Barbier, tapping the open letter, 'the *ancien prix de Rome* has a wife. Where wives are young women can go. Xavier can prepare the way, and, if you play your cards well, you can get Mademoiselle Louie taken off your hands while you go about.'

David nodded. He was sitting astride on the counter, his face shining with the excitement he was now too much of a man to show with the old freedom.

Suddenly there was a sound of wild voices from the inside room.

'Miss Grieve! Miss Grieve! don't you take that child away. Bring it back, I say; I'll go to your brother, I will!'

'That's Mrs. Mason's nurse,' said David, springing off the counter. 'What's up now?'

He threw open the door into the kitchen, just as Louie swept into the room from the other side. She had a white bundle in her arms, and her face was flushed with a sly triumph. After her ran the stout woman who was looking after Mrs. Mason, purple with indignation.

'Now look yo here, Mr. Grieve,' she cried at sight of David, 'I can't stand it, and I won't. Am I in charge of Mrs. Mason or am I not? Here 's Miss Grieve, as soon as my back 's turned, as soon as I've laid that blessed baby in its cot as quiet as a lamb—and it 's been howling since three o'clock this morning, as *yo* know—in she whips, claws it out of its cradle, and is off wi' it, Lord knows where. Thank the Lord, Mrs. Mason's asleep! If she weren't, she'd have a fit. She's feart to death o' Miss Grieve.

We noather on us know what to make on her. She's like a wild thing soomtimes—not a human creetur at aw—Gie me that chilt, I tell tha!'

Louie vouchsafed no answer. She sat down composedly before the fire, and, cradling the still sleeping child on her knee, she bent over it examining its waxen hands and tiny feet with an eager curiosity. The nurse, who stood over her trembling with anger, and only deterred from snatching the child away by the fear of wakening it, might have been talking to the wall.

'Now, look here, Louie, what d' you do that for?' said David, remonstrating; 'why can't you leave the child alone? You'll be putting Mrs. Mason in a taking, and that 'll do her harm.'

'Nowt o' t' sort,' said Louie composedly, 'it 's that woman there 'll wake her with screeching. She's asleep, and the baby's asleep, and I'm taking care of it. Why can't Mrs. Bury go and look after Mrs. Mason? She hasn't swept her room this two days, and it 's a sight to see.'

Pricked in a tender point, Mrs. Bury broke out again into a stream of protest and invective, only modified by her fear of waking her patient upstairs, and interrupted by appeals to David. But whenever she came near to take the baby Louie put her hands over it, and her wide black eyes shot out intimidating flames before which the aggressor invariably fell back.

Attracted by the fight, Barbier had come up to look, and now stood by the shop-door, riveted by Louie's strange beauty. She wore the same black and scarlet dress in which she had made her first appearance in Manchester. She now never wore it out of doors, her quick eye having at once convinced her that it was not in the fashion. But the instinct which had originally led her to contrive it was abundantly justified whenever she still condescended to put it on, so startling a relief it lent to the curves of her slim figure, developed during the last two years of growth to all womanly roundness and softness, and to the dazzling colour of her dark head and thin face. As she sat by the fire, the white bundle on her knee, one pointed foot swinging in front of her, now hanging over the baby, and now turning her bright dangerous look and compressed lips on Mrs. Bury, she made a peculiar witch-like impression on Barbier which thrilled his old nerves agreeably. It was clear, he thought, that the girl wanted a husband and a family of her own. Otherwise why should she run off with other people's children? But he would be a bold man who ventured on her!

David, at last seeing that Louie was in the mood to tear the babe asunder rather than give it up, with difficulty induced Mrs. Bury to leave her in possession for half an hour, promising that, as soon as the mother woke, the child should be given back.

'If I've had enough of it,' Louie put in, as a saving clause, luckily just too late to be heard by the nurse, who had sulkily closed the door behind her, declaring that 'sich an owdacious chit she never saw in her born days, and niver heerd on one oather.'

David and Barbier went back into the shop to talk, leaving Louie to her nursing. As soon as she was alone she laid back the flannel which lay round the child's head, and examined every inch of its downy poll and puckered face, her warm breath making the tiny lips twitch in sleep as it travelled across them. Then she lifted the little nightgown and looked at the pink feet nestling in their flannel wrapping. A glow sprang into her cheek; her great eyes devoured the sleeping creature. Its weakness and helplessness, its plasticity to anything she might choose to do with it, seemed to intoxicate her. She looked round her furtively, then bent and laid a hot covetous kiss on the small clenched hand. The child moved; had it been a little older it would have wakened; but Louie, hastily covering it up, began to rock it and sing to it.

The door into the shop was ajar. As David and Barbier were hanging together over a map of Paris which David had hunted out of his stores, Barbier suddenly threw up his head with a queer look.

'What's that she's singing?' he said quickly.

He got up hastily, overturning his stool as he did so, and went to the door to listen.

'I haven't heard that,' he said, with some agitation, 'since my father's sister used to sing it me when I was a small lad, up at Augoumat in the mountains near Puy!'

> Sur le pont d'Avignon
> Tout le monde y danse en rond;
> Les beaux messieurs font comme ça,
> Les beaux messieurs font comme ça.

The words were but just distinguishable as Louie sang. They were clipped and mutilated as by one who no longer understood what they meant. But the intonation was extraordinarily French, French of the South, and Barbier could hardly stand still under it.

'Where did you learn that?' he called to her from the door.

The girl stopped and looked at him with her bright bird-like glance. But she made no reply.

'Did your mother teach it you?' he asked, coming in.

'I suppose so,' she said indifferently.

'Can you talk any French—do you remember it?'

'No.'

'But you'd soon learn. You haven't got the English mouth, that's plain. Do you know your brother thinks of taking you to Paris?'

She started.

'He don't,' she said laconically.

'Oh, don't he. Just ask him then?'

Ten minutes later Louie had been put in possession of the situation. As David had fully expected, she took no notice whatever of his suggestion that after all she might not care to come.

They might be rough quarters, he said, and queer people about; and it would cost a terrible deal more for two than one. Should he not ask Dora Lomax to take her in for a fortnight? John, of course, would look after the shop. He spoke under the pressure of a sudden qualm, knowing it would be no use; but his voice had almost a note of entreaty in it.

'When do you want to be starting?' she asked him sharply. 'I'll not go to Dora's—so you needn't talk o' that. You can take the money out of what you'll be owing me next month.'

Her nostrils dilated as the quick breath passed through them. Barbier was fascinated by the extraordinary animation of the face, and could not take his eyes off her.

'Not for a fortnight,' said David reluctantly, answering her question. 'Barbier's letter says about the tenth of May. There's two country sales I must go to, and some other things to settle.'

She nodded.

'Well, then, I can get some things ready,' she said half to herself, staring across the baby into the fire.

When David and Barbier were gone together 'up street,' still talking over their plans, Louie leapt to her feet and laid the baby down—carelessly, as though she no longer cared anything at all about it—in the old-fashioned arm-chair wherein David spent so many midnight vigils. Then locking her hands behind her, she paced up and down the narrow room with the springing gait, the impetuous feverish grace, of some prisoned animal. Paris! Her education was small, and her ignorance enormous. But in the columns of a 'lady's paper' she had often bought from the station bookstall at Clough End she had devoured nothing more eagerly than the Paris letter, with its luscious descriptions of 'Paris fashions,' whereby even Lancashire women, even Clough End mill-hands in their Sunday best, were darkly governed from afar. All sorts of bygone dreams recurred to her—rich and subtle combinations of silks, satins, laces, furs, imaginary glories clothing an imaginary Louie Grieve. The remembrance of them filled her with a greed past description, and she forthwith conceived Paris as a place all shops, each of them superior to the best in St. Ann's Square—where one might gloat before the windows all day.

She made a spring to the door, and ran upstairs to her own room. There she began to pull out her dresses and scatter them about the floor, looking at them with a critical discontented eye.

Time passed. She was standing absorbed before an old gown, planning out its renovation, when a howl arose from downstairs. She fled like a roe deer, and pounced upon the baby just in time to checkmate Mrs. Bury, who was at her heels.

Quite regardless of the nurse's exasperation with her, first for leaving the child alone, half uncovered, in a chilly room, and now for again withholding it, Louie put the little creature against her neck, rocking and crooning to it. The sudden warm contact stilled the baby; it rubbed its head into the soft hollow thus pre-

sented to it, and its hungry lips sought eagerly for their natural food. The touch of them sent a delicious thrill through Louie; she turned her head round and kissed the tiny, helpless cheek with a curious violence; then, tired of Mrs. Bury, and anxious to get back to her plans, she almost threw the child to her.

'There—take it! I'll soon get it again when I want to.'

And she was as good as her word. The period of convalescence was to poor Mrs. Mason—a sickly, plaintive creature at the best of times—one long struggle and misery. Louie represented to her a sort of bird of prey, who was for ever descending on her child and carrying it off to unknown lairs. For neither mother nor nurse had Louie the smallest consideration; she despised and tyrannised over them both. But her hungry fondness for the baby grew with gratification, and there was no mastering her in the matter. Warm weather came, and when she reached home after her work, she managed by one ruse or another to get hold of the child, and on one occasion she disappeared with it into the street for hours. David was amazed by the whim, but neither he nor anyone else could control it. At last, Mrs. Mason was more or less hysterical all day long, and hardly sane when Louie was within reach. As for the husband, who managed to be more at home during the days of his wife's weakness than he had yet been since David's tenancy began, he complained to David and spoke his mind to Louie once or twice, and then, suddenly, he ceased to pay any attention to his wife's wails. With preternatural quickness the wife guessed the reason. A fresh terror seized her—terror of the girl's hateful beauty. She dragged herself from her bed, found a room, while Louie was at her work, and carried off baby and husband, leaving no address. Luckily for her, the impression of Louie's black eyes proved to have been a passing intoxication, and the poor mother breathed and lived again.

Meanwhile Louie's excitement and restlessness over the Paris plan made her more than usually trying to Dora. During this fortnight she could never be counted on for work, not even when it was a question of finishing an important commission. She was too full of her various preparations. Barbier offered her, for instance, a daily French lesson. She grasped in an instant the facilities which even the merest smattering of French would give her in Paris; every night she sat up over her phrase book, and every afternoon she cut her work short to go to Barbier. Her whole life seemed to be one flame of passionate expectation, though what exactly she expected it would have been hard to say.

Poor Dora! She had suffered many things in much patience all these weeks. Louie's clear, hard mind, her sensuous temperament, her apparent lack of all maidenly reserve, all girlish softness, made her incomprehensible to one for whom life was an iridescent web of ideal aims and obligations. The child of grace was dragged out of her own austere or delicate thoughts, and

made to touch, taste, and handle what the 'world,' as the Christian understands it, might be like. Like every other daughter of the people, Dora was familiar enough with sin and weakness—Daddy alone had made her amply acquainted with both at one portion or another of his career. But just this particular temper of Louie's, with its apparent lack both of passion and of moral sense, was totally new to her, and produced at times a stifling impression upon her, without her being able to explain to herself with any clearness what was the matter.

Yet, in truth, it often seemed as if the lawless creature had been in some sort touched by Dora, as if daily contact with a being so gentle and so magnanimous had won even upon her. That confidence, for instance, which Louie had promised John, at Dora's expense, had never been made. When it came to the point, some touch of remorse, of shame, had sealed the girl's mocking lips.

One little fact in particular had amazed Dora. Louie insisted, for a caprice, on going with her one night, in Easter week, to St. Damian's, and thenceforward went often. What attracted her, Dora puzzled herself to discover. When, however, Louie had been a diligent spectator, even at early services, for some weeks, Dora timidly urged that she might be confirmed, and that Father Russell would take her into his class. Louie laughed immoderately at the idea, but continued to go to St. Damian's all the same. Dora could not bear to be near her in church, but however far away she might place herself, she was more conscious than she liked to be of Louie's conspicuous figure and hat thrown out against a particular pillar which the girl affected. The sharp uplifted profile with its disdainful expression drew her eyes against their will. She was also constantly aware of the impression Louie made upon the crowd, of the way in which she was stared at and remarked upon. Whenever she passed in or out of the church, people turned, and the girl, expecting it, and totally unabashed, flashed her proud look from side to side.

But once in her place, she was not inattentive. The dark chancel with its flowers and incense, the rich dresses and slow movements of the priests, the excitement of the processional hymns—these things caught her and held her. Her look was fixed and eager all the time. As to the clergy, Dora spoke to Father's Russell's sister, and some efforts were made to get hold of the new-comer. But none of them were at all successful. The girl slipped through everybody's hands. Only in the case of one of the curates, a man with a powerful, ugly head, and a penetrating personality, did she show any wavering. Dora fancied that she put herself once or twice in his way, that something about him attracted her, and that he might have influenced her. But as soon as the Paris project rose on the horizon, Louie thought of nothing else. Father Impey and St. Damian's, like everything else, were forgotten. She never went near the church from the evening David told her his news to the day they left Manchester.

David ran in to say good-bye to Daddy and Dora on the night before they were to start. Since the Paris journey had been in the air, Daddy's friendliness for the young fellow had revived. He was not, after all, content to sit at home upon his six hundred pounds 'like a hatching hen,' and so far Daddy, whose interest in him had been for the time largely dashed by his sudden accession to fortune, was appeased.

When David appeared Lomax was standing on the rug, with a book under his arm.

'Well, good-bye to you, young man, good-bye to you. And here's a book to take with you that you may read in the train. It will stir you up a bit, give you an idea or two. Don't you come back too soon.'

'Father,' remonstrated Dora, who was standing by, 'who's to look after his business?'

'Be quiet, Dora! That book 'll show him what can be made even of a beastly bookseller.'

David took it from him, looked at the title, and laughed. He knew it well. It was the 'Life and Errors of John Dunton, Citizen of London,' the eccentric record of a seventeenth-century dealer in books, who, like Daddy, had been a character and a vagrant.

'Och! Don't I know it by heart?' said Daddy, with enthusiasm. 'Many a time it's sent me off tramping, when my poor Isabella thought she'd got me tied safe by the heels in the chimney corner. "*Though* love is strong as death, and every good man loves his wife as himself, *yet*—many's the score of times I've said it off pat to Isabella—*yet* I cannot think of being confined in a narrower study than the whole world." There's a man for you! He gets rid of one wife and saddles himself with another—sorrow a bit will he stop at home for either of them! "Finding I am for travelling, Valeria, to show the height of her love, is as willing I should see Europe as Eliza was I should see America." Och! give me the book, you divil,' cried Daddy, growing more and more Hibernian as his passion rose, 'and, bedad, but I'll drive it into you.'

And, reaching over, Daddy seized it, and turned over the pages with a trembling hand. Dora flushed, and the tears rose into her eyes. She realised perfectly that this performance was levelled at her at least as much as at David. Daddy's mad irritability had grown of late with every week.

'Listen to this, Davy!' cried Daddy, putting up his hand for silence. '"When I have crossed the Hellespont, where poor Leander was drowned, Greece, China, and the Holy Land are the other three countries I'm bound to. And perhaps when my hand is in—"'

'*My hand is in!*' repeated Daddy, in an ecstasy. 'What a jewel of a man!'

'I may step thence to the Indies, for I am a true lover of travels, and, when I am once mounted, care not whether I meet

the sun at his rising or going down, provided only I may but ramble . . . *He* is truly a scholar who is versed in the volume of the Universe, who doth not so much read of Nature as study Nature herself.'

'Well said—well said indeed!' cried Daddy, flinging the book down with a wild gesture which startled them both. 'Was that the man, Adrian Lomax, to spend the only hours of the only life he was ever likely to see—his first thought in the morning, and his last thought at night—in tickling the stomachs of Manchester clerks?'

His peaked chin and straggling locks fell forward on his breast. He stared sombrely at the young people before him, in an attitude which, as usual, was the attitude of an actor.

David's natural instinct was to jeer. But a glance at Dora perplexed him. There was some tragedy he did not understand under this poor comedy.

'Don't speak back,' said Dora, hurriedly, under her breath, as she passed him to get her frame. 'It only makes him worse.'

After a few minutes' broken chat, which Daddy's mood made it difficult to keep up, David took his departure. Dora followed him downstairs.

'You're going to be away a fortnight,' she said, timidly.

As she spoke, she moved her head backwards and forwards against the wall, as though it ached, and she could not find a restful spot.

'Oh, we shall be back by then, never fear!' said David, cheerfully. He was growing more and more sorry for her.

'I should like to see foreign parts,' she said wistfully. 'Is there a beautiful church, a cathedral, in Paris? Oh, there are a great many in France, I know! I've heard the people at St. Damian's speak of them. I would like to see the services. But they can't be nicer than ours.'

David smiled.

'I'm afraid I can't tell you much about them, Miss Dora; they aren't in my line. Good-bye, and keep your heart up.'

He was going, but he turned back to say quickly—

'Why don't you let him go off for a bit of a tramp? It might quiet him.'

'I would; I would,' she said eagerly; 'but I don't know what would come of it. We're dreadfully behindhand this month, and if he were to go away, people would be down on us; they'd think he wanted to get out of paying.'

He stayed talking a bit, trying to advise her, and, in the first place, trying to find out how wrong things were. But she had not yet come to the point of disclosing her father's secrets. She parried his questions, showing him all the while, by look and voice, that she was grateful to him for asking—for caring.

He went at last, and she locked the door behind him. But when that was done, she stood still in the dark, wringing her hands in a silent passion of longing—longing to be with him, out-

side, in the night, to hear his voice, to see his handsome looks again. Oh! the fortnight would be long. So long as he was there, within a stone's throw, though he did not love her, and she was sad and anxious, yet Manchester held her treasure, and Manchester streets had glamour, had charm.

He walked to Piccadilly, and took a 'bus to Mortimer Street. He must say good-bye also to Mr. Ancrum, who had been low and ill of late.

'So you are off, David?' said Ancrum, rousing himself from what seemed a melancholy brooding over books that he was in truth not reading. As David shook hands with him, the small fusty room, the pale face and crippled form awoke in the lad a sense of indescribable dreariness. In a flash of recoil and desire his thought sprang to the journey of the next day—to the May seas—the foreign land.

'Well, good luck to you!' said the minister, altering his position so as to look at his visitor full, and doing it with a slowness which showed that all movement was an effort. 'Look after your sister, Davy.'

David had sat down at Ancrum's invitation. He said nothing in answer to this last remark, and Ancrum could not decipher him in the darkness visible of the ill-trimmed lamp.

'She's been on your mind, Davy, hasn't she?' he said, gently, laying his blanched hand on the young man's knee.

'Well, perhaps she has,' David admitted, with an odd note in his voice. 'She's not an easy one to manage.'

'No. But you've *got* to manage her, Davy. There's only you and she together. It's your task. It's set you. And you're young, indeed, and raw, to have that beautiful self-willed creature on your hands.'

'Beautiful? Do you think she's that?' David tried to laugh it off.

The minister nodded.

'You'll find it out in Paris even more than you have here. Paris is a bad place, they say. So's London, for the matter of that. Davy, before you go, I've got one thing to say to you.'

'Say away, sir.'

'You know a great deal, Davy. My wits are nothing to yours. You'll shoot ahead of all your old friends, my boy, some day. But there's one thing you know nothing about—absolutely nothing—and you prate as if you did. Perhaps you must turn Christian before you do. I don't know. At least, so long as you're not a Christian you won't know what *we* mean by it—what the Bible means by it. It's one little word, Davy—*sin*.'

The minister spoke with a deep intensity, as though his whole being were breathed into what he said. David sat silent and embarrassed, opposition rising in him to what he thought ministerial assumption.

'Well, I don't know what you mean,' he said, after a pause. 'One needn't be very old to find out that a good many people and

things in the world are pretty bad. Only we Secularists explain it differently from you. We put a good deal of it down to education, or health, or heredity.'

'Oh, I know—I know!' said the minister hastily, as though shrinking from the conversation he had himself evoked. 'I'm not fit to talk about it, Davy. I'm ill, I think! But there were those two things I wanted to say to you—your sister—and—'

His voice dropped. He shaded his eyes and looked away from David into the smouldering coals.

'No—no,' he resumed almost in a whisper; 'it's the *will*—it's the *will*. It's not anything he says, and Christ—*Christ* 's the only help.'

Again there was a silence. David studied his old teacher attentively, as far as the half-light availed him. The young man was simply angry with a religion which could torment a soul and body like this. Ancrum had been 'down' in this way for a long time now. Was another of his black fits approaching? If so, religion was largely responsible for them!

When at last David sighted his own door, he perceived a figure lounging on the steps.

'I say,' he said to himself with a groan, 'it's John!'

'What on earth do you want, John, at this time of night?' he demanded. But he knew perfectly.

'Look here!' said the other thickly, 'it's all straight. You're coming back in a fortnight, and you'll bring her back too!'

David laughed impatiently.

'Do you think I shall lose her in Paris or drop her in the Channel?'

'I don't know,' said Dalby, with a curiously heavy and indistinct utterance. 'She's very bad to me. She won't ever marry me; I know that. But when I think I might never see her again I'm fit to go and hang myself.'

David began to kick the pebbles in the road.

'You know what I think about it all,' he said at last, gloomily. 'I've told you before now. She couldn't care for you if she tried. It isn't a ha'p'orth of good. I don't believe she'll ever care for anybody. Anyway, she'll marry nobody who can't give her money and fine clothes. There! You may put that in your pipe and smoke it, for it's as true as you stand there.'

John turned round restlessly, laid his hands against the wall, and his head upon them.

'Well, it don't matter,' he said slowly, after a pause. 'I'll be here early. Good night!'

David stood and looked after him in mingled disgust and pity.

'I must pack him off,' he said, 'I must.'

Then he threw back his young shoulders and drew in the warm spring air with a long breath. Away with care and trouble! Things would come right—must come right. This weather was summer, and in forty-eight hours they would be in Paris!

BOOK III

STORM AND STRESS

CHAPTER I

The brother and sister left Manchester about midday, and spent the night in London at a little City hotel much frequented by Nonconformist ministers, which Ancrum had recommended.

Then next day! How little those to whom all the widest opportunities of life come for the asking, can imagine such a zest, such a freshness of pleasure! David had hesitated long before the expense of the day service *viâ* Calais; they could have gone by night third class for half the money; or they could have taken returns by one of the cheaper and longer routes. But the eagerness to make the most of every hour of time and daylight prevailed; they were to go by Calais and come back by Dieppe, seeing thereby as much as possible on the two journeys in addition to the fortnight in Paris. The mere novelty of going anything but third class was full of savour; Louie's self-conscious dignity as she settled herself into her corner on leaving Charing Cross caught David's eye; he saw himself reflected and laughed.

It was a glorious day, the firstling of the summer. In the blue overhead the great clouds rose intensely thunderously white, and journeyed seaward under a light westerly wind. The railway banks, the copses were all primroses; every patch of water had in it the white and azure of the sky; the lambs were lying in the still scanty shadow of the elms; every garden showed its tulips and wallflowers, and the air, the sunlight, the vividness of each hue and line bore with them an intoxicating joy, especially for eyes still adjusted to the tones and lights of Manchester in winter.

The breeze carried them merrily over a dancing sea. And once on the French side they spent their first hour in crossing from one side of their carriage to the other, pointing and calling incessantly. For the first time since certain rare moments in their childhood they were happy together and at one. Mother Earth unrolled for them a corner of her magic show, and they took it like children at the play, now shouting, now spell-bound.

David had George Sand's 'Mauprat' on his knee, but he read nothing the whole day. Never had he used his eyes so intently, so passionately. Nothing escaped them, neither the detail of that strange and beautiful fen from which Amiens rises—a country of peat and peat-cutters where the green plain is diapered with innumerable tiny lakes edged with black heaps of turf and daintily set with scattered trees—nor the delicate charm of the forest lands about Chantilly. So much thinner and gracefuller

these woods were than English woods! French art and skill were here already in the wild country. Each tree stood out as though it had been personally thought for; every plantation was in regular lines; each woody walk drove straight from point to point, following out a plan orderly and intricate as a spider's web.

By this time Louie's fervour of curiosity and attention had very much abated; she grew tired and cross, and presently fell asleep. But, with every mile less between them and Paris, David's pulse beat faster, and his mind became more absorbed in the flying scene. He hung beside the window, thrilling with enchantment and delight, drinking in the soft air, the beauty of the evening clouds, the wonderful greens and silvers and fiery browns of the poplars. His mind was full of images—the deep lily-sprinkled lake wherein Sténio, Lélia's poet lover, plunged and died; the grandiose landscape of Victor Hugo; René sitting on the cliff-side, and looking farewell to the white home of his childhood;—of lines from 'Childe Harold' and from Shelley. His mind was in a ferment of youth and poetry, and the France he saw was not the workaday France of peasant and high road and factory, but the creation of poetic intelligence, of ignorance and fancy.

Paris came in a flash. He had realised to the full the squalid and ever-widening zone of London, had frittered away his expectations almost, in the passing it; but here the great city had hardly announced itself before they were in the midst of it, shot out into the noise, and glare, and crowd of the Nord station.

They had no luggage to wait for, and David, trembling with excitement so that he could hardly give the necessary orders, shouldered the bags, got a cab and gave the address. Outside it was still twilight, but the lamps were lit and the Boulevard into which they presently turned seemed to brother and sister a blaze of light. The young green of the trees glittered under the gas like the trees of a pantomime; the kiosks threw their lights out upon the moving crowd; shops and cafés were all shining and alive; and on either hand rose the long line of stately houses, unbroken by any London or Manchester squalors and inequalities, towering as it seemed into the skies, and making for the great spectacle of life beneath them a setting more gay, splendid, and complete than any Englishman in his own borders can ever see.

Louie had turned white with pleasure and excitement. All her dreams of gaiety and magnificence, of which the elements had been gathered from the illustrated papers and the Manchester theatres, were more than realised by these Paris gas-lights, these vast houses, these laughing and strolling crowds.

'Look at those people having their coffee out of doors,' she cried to David, 'and that white and gold place behind. Goodness! what they must spend in gas! And just look at those two girls—look, quick—there, with the young man in the black moustache—they *are* loud, but aren't their dresses just sweet?'

She craned her neck out of window, exclaiming—now at this,

now at that—till suddenly they passed out of the Boulevard into the comparative darkness of side ways. Here the height of the houses produced a somewhat different impression; Louie looked out none the less keenly, but her chatter ceased.

At last the cab drew up with a clatter at the side of a particularly dark and narrow street, ascending somewhat sharply to the north-west from the point where they stopped.

'Now for the *concierge*,' said David, looking round him, after he had paid the man.

And conning Barbier's directions in his mind, he turned into the gateway, and made boldly for a curtained door behind which shone a light.

The woman, who came out in answer to his knock, looked him all over from head to foot, while he explained himself in his best French.

'*Tiens*,' she said, indifferently, to a man behind her, 'it's the people for No. 26—*des Anglais—M. Paul te l'a dit.* Hand me the key.'

The *bonhomme* addressed—a little, stooping, wizened creature, with china-blue eyes, showing widely in his withered face under the light of the paraffin-lamp his wife was holding—reached a key from a board on the wall and gave it to her.

The woman again surveyed them both, the young man and the girl, and seemed to debate with herself whether she should take the trouble to be civil. Finally she said in an ungracious voice—

'It's the fourth floor to the right. I must take you up, I suppose.'

David thanked her, and she preceded them with the light through a door opposite and up some stone stairs.

When they had mounted two flights, she turned abruptly on the landing—

'You take the *appartement* from M. Dubois?'

'Yes,' said David, enchanted to find that, thanks to old Barbier's constant lessons, he could both understand and reply with tolerable ease; 'for a fortnight.'

'Take care; the landlord will be descending on you; M. Dubois never pays; he may be turned out any day, and his things sold. Where is Mademoiselle going to sleep?'

'But in M. Dubois' *appartement*,' said David, hoping this time, in his dismay, that he did *not* understand; 'he promised to arrange everything.'

'He has arranged nothing. Do you wish that I should provide some things? You can hire some furniture from me. And do you want service?'

The woman had a grasping eye. David's frugal instincts took alarm.

'*Merci*, Madame! My sister and I do not require much. We shall wait upon ourselves. If Madame will tell us the name of some restaurant near—'

Instead, Madame made an angry sound and thrust the key abruptly into Louie's hand, David being laden with the bags.

'There are two more flights,' she said roughly; 'then turn to the left, and go up the staircase straight in front of you—first door to the right. You've got eyes; you'll find the way.'

'*Mais, Madame*—' cried David, bewildered by these directions, and trying to detain her.

But she was already half-way down the flight below them, throwing back remarks which, to judge from their tone, were not complimentary.

There was no help for it. Louie was dropping with fatigue, and beginning to be much out of temper. David with difficulty assumed a hopeful air, and up they went again. Leading off the next landing but one they found a narrow passage, and at the end of it a ladder-like staircase. At the top of this they came upon a corridor at right angles, in which the first door bore the welcome figures '26.'

'All right,' said David; 'here we are. Now we'll just go in, and look about us. Then if you'll sit and rest a bit, I'll run down and see where we can get something to eat.'

'Be quick, then—do,' said Louie. 'I'm just fit to drop.'

With a beating heart he put the key into the lock of the door. It fitted, but he could not turn it. Both he and Louie tried in vain.

'What a nuisance!' said he at last. 'I must go and fetch up that woman again. You sit down and wait.'

As he spoke there was a sound below of quick steps, and of a voice, a woman's voice, humming a song.

'Some one coming,' he said to Louie; 'perhaps they understand the lock.'

They ran down to the landing below to reconnoitre. There was, of course, gas on the staircase, and as they hung over the iron railing they saw mounting towards them a young girl. She wore a light fawn-coloured dress and a hat covered with Parma violets. Hearing voices above her, she threw her head back, and stopped a moment. Louie's eye was caught by her hand and its tiny wrist as it lay on the balustrade, and by the coils and twists of her fair hair. David saw no details, only what seemed to him a miracle of grace and colour, born in an instant, out of the dark—or out of his own excited fancy?

She came slowly up the steps, looking at them, at the tall dark youth and the girl beside him. Then on the top step she paused, instead of going past them. David took off his hat, but all the practical questions he had meant to ask deserted him. His French seemed to have flown.

'You are strangers, aren't you?' she said, in a clear, high, somewhat imperious voice. 'What number do you want?'

Her expression had a certain *hauteur*, as of one defending her native ground against intruders. Under the stimulus of it David found his tongue.

'We have taken M. Paul Dubois' rooms,' he said. 'We have found his door, but the key the *concierge* gave us does not fit it.'

She laughed, a free, frank laugh, which had a certain wild note in it.

'These doors have to be coaxed,' she said; 'they don't like foreigners. Give it me. This is my way, too.'

Stepping past them, she preceded them up the narrow stairs, and was just about to try the key in the lock, when a sudden recollection seemed to flash upon her.

'I know!' she said, turning upon them. '*Tenez—que je suis bête!* You are Dubois' English friends. He told me something, and I had forgotten all about it. You are going to take his rooms?'

'For a week or two,' said David, irritated a little by the laughing malice, the sarcastic wonder of her eyes, 'while he is doing some work in Brussels. It seemed a convenient arrangement, but if we are not comfortable we shall go elsewhere. If you can open the door for us we shall be greatly obliged to you, Mademoiselle. But if not I must go down for the *concierge*. We have been travelling all day, and my sister is tired.'

'Where did you learn such good French?' she said carelessly, at the same time leaning her weight against the door, and manipulating the key in such a way that the lock turned, and the door flew open.

Behind it appeared a large dark space. The light from the gas-jet in the passage struck into it, but beyond a chair and a tall screen-like object in the middle of the floor, it seemed to David to be empty.

'That's his *atelier*, of course,' said the unknown; 'and mine is next to it, at the other end. I suppose he has a cupboard to sleep in somewhere. Most of us have. But I don't know anything about Dubois. I don't like him. He is not one of my friends.'

She spoke in a dry, masculine voice, which contrasted in the sharpest way with her youth, her dress, her dainty smallness. Then, all of a sudden, as her eyes travelled over the English pair standing bewildered on the threshold of Dubois' most uninviting apartment, she began to laugh again. Evidently the situation seemed to her extremely odd.

'Did you ask the people downstairs to get anything ready for you?' she inquired.

'No,' said David, hesitating; 'we thought we could manage for ourselves.'

'Well—perhaps—after the first,' she said, still laughing. 'But—I may as well warn you—the Merichat will be very uncivil to you if you don't manage to pay her for something. Hadn't you better explore? That thing in the middle is Dubois' easel, of course.'

David groped his way in, took some matches from his pocket, found a gas-bracket with some difficulty, and lit up. Then he

and Louie looked round them. They saw a gaunt high room, lit on one side by a huge studio-window, over which various tattered blinds were drawn; a floor of bare boards, with a few rags of carpet here and there; in the middle, a table covered with painter's apparatus of different kinds; palettes, paints, rags, tin-pots, and, thrown down amongst them, some stale crusts of bread; a large easel, with a number of old and dirty canvases piled upon it; two chairs, one of them without the usual complement of legs; a few etchings and oil-sketches and fragments of coloured stuffs pinned against the wall in wild confusion; and, spread out casually behind the easel, an iron folding-bedstead, without either mattress or bed-clothes. In the middle of the floor stood a smeared kettle on a spirit-stove, and a few odds and ends of glass and china were on the mantelpiece, together with a paraffin-lamp. Every article in the room was thick in dust.

When she had, more or less, ascertained these attractive details, Louie stood still in the middle of M. Dubois' apartment.

'What did he tell all those lies for?' she said to David fiercely. For in the very last communication received from him, Dubois had described himself as having made all necessary preparations '*et pour la toilette et pour le manger.*' He had also asked for the rent in advance, which David with some demur had paid.

'Here's something,' cried David; and, turning a handle in the wall, he pulled a flimsy door open and disclosed what seemed a cupboard. The cupboard, however, contained a bed, some bedding, blankets, and washing arrangements; and David joyously announced his discoveries. Louie took no notice of him. She was tired, angry, disgusted. The illusion of Paris was, for the moment, all gone. She sat herself down on one of the two chairs, and, taking off her hat, she threw it from her on to the belittered table with a passionate gesture.

The French girl had so far stood just outside, leaning against the doorway, and looking on with unabashed amusement while they made their inspection. Now, however, as Louie uncovered, the spectator at the door made a little, quick sound, and then ran forward.

'*Mais, mon Dieu!* how handsome you are!' she said with a whimsical eagerness, stopping short in front of Louie, and driving her little hands deep into the pockets of her jacket. 'What a head!—what eyes! Why didn't I see before? You must sit to me—you *must!* You will, won't you? I will pay you anything you like! You sha'n't be dull—somebody shall come and amuse you. *Voyons—monsieur!*' she called imperiously.

David came up. She stood with one hand on the table leaning her light weight backward, looking at them with all her eyes—the very embodiment of masterful caprice.

'Both of them!' she said under her breath, '*superbe!*' Monsieur, look here. You and mademoiselle are tired. There is nothing in these rooms. Dubois is a scamp without a sou. He does no work, and he gambles on the Bourse. Everything he

had he has sold by degrees. If he has gone to Brussels now to work honestly, it is for the first time in his life. He lives on the hope of getting money out of an uncle in England—that I know, for he boasts of it to everybody. It is just like him to play a practical joke on strangers. No doubt you have paid him already—*n'est-ce pas?* I thought as much. Well, never mind! My rooms are next door. I am Elise Delaunay. I work in Taranne's *atelier*. I am an artist, pure and simple, and I live to please myself and nobody else. But I have a chair or two, and the woman downstairs looks after me because I make it worth her while. Come with me. I will give you some supper, and I will lend you a rug and a pillow for that bed. Then to-morrow you can decide what to do.'

David protested, stammering and smiling. But he had flushed a rosy red, and there was no real resistance in him. He explained the invitation to Louie, who had been looking helplessly from one to the other, and she at once accepted it. She understood perfectly that the French girl admired her; her face relaxed its frown; she nodded to the stranger with a sort of proud yielding, and then let herself be taken by the arm and led once more along the corridor.

Elise Delaunay unlocked her own door.

'*Bien!*' she said, putting her head in first, 'Merichat has earned her money. Now go in—go in!—and see if I don't give you some supper.'

CHAPTER II

She pushed them in, and shut the door behind them. They looked round them in amazement. Here was an *atelier* precisely corresponding in size and outlook to Dubois'. But to their tired eyes the change was one from squalor to fairyland. The room was not in fact luxurious at all. But there was a Persian rug or two on the polished floor; there was a wood fire burning on the hearth, and close to it there was a low sofa or divan covered with pieces of old stuffs, and flanked by a table whereon stood a little meal, a roll, some cut ham, part of a flat fruit tart from the *pâtissier* next door, a coffee pot, and a spirit kettle ready for lighting. There were two easels in the room; one was laden with sketches and photographs; the other carried a half-finished picture of a mosque interior in Oran—a rich splash of colour, making a centre for all the rest. Everywhere indeed, on the walls, on the floor, or standing on the chairs, were studies of Algeria, done with an ostentatiously bold and rapid hand. On the mantelpiece was a small reproduction in terra cotta of one of Dalou's early statues, a peasant woman in a long cloak straining her homely baby to her breast—true and passionate. Books lay about, and in a corner was a piano, open, with a confusion of tattered music upon it. And everywhere, as it seemed to Louie,

were *shoes!*—the daintiest and most fantastic shoes imaginable—Turkish shoes, Pompadour shoes, old shoes and new shoes, shoes with heels and shoes without, shoes lined with fur, and shoes blown together, as one might think, out of cardboard and ribbons. The English girl's eyes fastened upon them at once.

'Ah, you tink my shoes pretty,' said the hostess, speaking a few words of English, '*c'est mon dada, voyez-vous—ma collection!—Tenez*—I cannot say dat in English, Monsieur; explain to your sister. My shoes are my passion, next to my foot. I am not pretty, but my foot is ravishing. Dalou modelled it for his Siren. That turned my head. Sit down, Mademoiselle—we will find some plates.'

She pushed Louie into a corner of the divan, and then she went over to a cupboard standing against the wall, and beckoned to David.

'Take the plates—and this potted meat. Now for the *petit vin* my doctor cousin brought me last week from the family estate. I have stowed it away somewhere. Ah! here it is. We are from the Gironde—at least my mother was. My father was nobody—*bourgeois* from tip to toe, though he called himself an artist. It was a *mésalliance* for her when she married him. Oh, he led her a life!—she died when I was small, and last year *he* died, eleven months ago. I did my best to cry. *Impossible!* He had made Maman and me cry too much. And now I am perfectly alone in the world, and perfectly well-behaved. Monsieur Prudhomme may talk—I snap my finger at him. You will have your ideas, of course. No matter! If you eat my salt, you will hardly be able to speak ill of me.'

'Mademoiselle!' cried David, inwardly cursing his shyness—a shyness new to him—and his complete apparent lack of anything to say, or the means of saying it.

'Oh, don't protest!—after that journey you can't afford to waste your breath. Move a little, Monsieur—let me open the other door of the cupboard—there are some chocolates worth eating on that back shelf. Do you admire my *armoire?* It is old Breton—it belonged to my grandmother, who was from Morbihan. She brought her linen in it. It is cherry wood, you see, mounted in silver. You may search Paris for another like it. Look at that flower work on the panels. It is not *banal* at all—it has character—there is real design in it. Now take the chocolates, and these sardines—put them down over there. As for me, I make the coffee.'

She ran over to the spirit lamp, and set it going; she measured out the coffee; then sitting down on the floor, she took the bellows and blew up the logs.

'Tell me your name, Monsieur?' she said suddenly, looking round.

David gave it in full, his own name and Louie's. Then he walked up to her, making an effort to be at his ease, and said something about their French descent. His mode of speaking

was slow and bookish—correct, but wanting in life. After this year's devotion to French books, after all his compositions with Barbier, he had supposed himself so familiar with French! With the woman from the *loge*, indeed, he could have talked at large, had she been conversational instead of rude. But here, with this little glancing creature, he felt himself plunged in a perfect quagmire of ignorance and stupidity. When he spoke of being half French, she became suddenly grave, and studied him with an intent piercing look. 'No,' she said slowly, 'no, at bottom you are not French a bit, you are all English, I feel it. I should fight you—*à outrance! Grive*—what a strange name! It's a bird's name. You are not like it—you do not belong to it. But *David!*—ah, that is better. *Voyons!*'

She sprang up, ran over to the furthest easel, and, routing about amongst its disorder of prints and photographs, she hit upon one, which she held up triumphantly.

'There, Monsieur!—there is your prototype. That is David—the young David—scourge of the Philistine. You are bigger and broader. I would rather fight him than you—but it is like you, all the same. Take it.'

And she held out to him a photograph of the Donatello David at Florence—the divine young hero in his shepherd's hat, fresh from the slaying of the oppressor.

He looked at it, red and wondering, then shook his head.

'What is it? Who made it, Mademoiselle?'

'Donatello—oh, I never saw it. I was never in Italy, but a friend gave it me. It is like you, I tell you. But, what use is that? You are English—yes, you *are*, in spite of your mother. It is very well to be called David—you may be Goliath all the time!'

Her tone had grown hard and dry—insulting almost. Her look sent him a challenge.

He stared at her dumbfounded. All the self-confidence with which he had hitherto governed his own world had deserted him. He was like a tongue-tied child in her hands.

She enjoyed her mastery, and his discomfiture. Her look changed and melted in an instant.

'I am rude,' she said, 'and you can't answer me back—not yet—for a day or two. *Pardon!* Monsieur David—Mademoiselle—will you come to supper?'

She put chairs and waved them to their places with the joyous animation of a child, waiting on them, fetching this and that, with the quickest, most graceful motions. She had brought from the *armoire* some fine white napkins, and now she produced a glass or two and made her guests provide themselves with the red wine which neither had ever tasted before, and over which Louie made an involuntary face. Then she began to chatter and to eat—both as fast as possible—now laughing at her own English or at David's French, and now laying down her knife and fork that she might look at Louie, with an intent professional look

which contrasted oddly with the wild freedom of her talk and movements.

Suddenly she took up a wineglass and held it out to David with a piteous childish gesture.

'Fill it, Monsieur, and then drink—drink to my good luck. I wish for something—with my *life*—my *soul;* but there are people who hate me, who would delight to see me crushed. And it will be three weeks—three long long weeks, almost—before I know.'

She was very pale, the tears had sprung to her eyes, and the hand holding the glass trembled. David flushed and frowned in the vain desire to understand her.

'What am I to do?' he said, taking the glass mechanically, but making no use of it.

'Drink!—drink to my success. I have two pictures, Monsieur, in the Salon; you know what that means? the same as your *Académie? Parfaitement!* ah! you understand. One is well hung, on the line; the other has been shamefully treated—but *shamefully!* And all the world knows why. I have some enemies on the jury, and they delight in a mean triumph over me—a triumph which is a scandal. But I have friends, too—good friends—and in three weeks the rewards will be voted. You understand? the medals, and the *mentions honorables.* As for a medal—no! I am only two years in the *atelier;* I am not unreasonable. But a *mention!*—ah! Monsieur David, if they don't give it me I shall be very miserable.'

Her voice had gone through a whole gamut of emotion in this speech—pride, elation, hope, anger, offended dignity—sinking finally to the plaintive note of a child asking for consolation.

And luckily David had followed her. His French novels had brought him across the Salon and the jury system; and Barbier had told him tales. His courage rose. He poured the wine into the glass with a quick, uncertain hand, and raised it to his lips.

'*A la gloire de Mademoiselle!*' he cried, tossing it down with a gesture almost as free and vivid as her own.

Her eye followed him with excitement, taking in every detail of the action—the masculine breadth of chest, the beauty of the dark head and short upper lip.

'Very good—very good!' she said, clapping her small hands. 'You did that admirably—you improve—*n'est-ce pas, Mademoiselle?*'

But Louie only stared blankly and somewhat haughtily in return. She was beginning to be tired of her silent *rôle*, and of the sort of subordination it implied. The French girl seemed to divine it, and her.

'She does not like me,' she said, with a kind of wonder under her breath, so that David did not catch the words. 'The other is quite different.'

Then, springing up, she searched in the pockets of her jacket for something—lips pursed, brows knitted, as though the quest were important.

'Where are my cigarettes?' she demanded sharply. 'Ah! here they are. Mademoiselle—Monsieur.'

Louie laughed rudely, pushing them back without a word. Then she got up, and began boldly to look about her. The shoes attracted her, and some Algerian scarves and burnouses that were lying on a distant chair. She went to turn them over.

Mademoiselle Delaunay looked after her for a moment—with the same critical attention as before—then with a shrug she threw herself into a corner of the divan, drawing about her a bit of old embroidered stuff which lay there. It was so flung, however, as to leave one dainty foot in an embroidered silk stocking visible beyond it. The tone of the stocking was repeated in the bunch of violets at her neck, and the purples of the flowers told with charming effect against her white skin and the pale fawn colour of her dress and hair. David watched her with intoxication. She could hardly be taller than most children of fourteen, but her proportions were so small and delicate that her height, whatever it was, seemed to him the perfect height for a woman. She handled her cigarette with mannish airs; unless it were some old harridan in a collier's cottage, he had never seen a woman smoke before, and certainly he had never guessed it could become her so well. Not pretty! He was in no mood to dissect the pale irregular face with its subtleties of line and expression; but, as she sat there smoking and chatting, she was to him the realisation—the climax of his dream of Paris. All the lightness and grace of that dream, the strangeness, the thrill of it seemed to have passed into her.

'Will you stay in those rooms?' she inquired, slowly blowing away the curls of smoke in front of her.

David replied that he could not yet decide. He looked as he felt—in a difficulty.

'Oh! *you* will do well enough there. But your sister—*Tenez!* There is a family on the floor below—an artist and his wife. I have known them take *pensionnaires.* They are not the most distinguished persons in the world—*mais enfin!*—it is not for long. Your sister might do worse than board with them.'

David thanked her eagerly. He would make all inquiries. He had in his pocket a note of introduction from Dubois to Madame Cervin, and another, he believed, to the gentleman on the ground floor—to M. Montjoie, the sculptor.

'Ah! M. Montjoie!'

Her brows went up, her grey eyes flashed. As for her tone it was half amused, half contemptuous. She began to speak, moved restlessly, then apparently thought better of it.

'After all,' she said, in a rapid undertone, '*qu'est-ce que cela me fait? Allons.* Why did you come here at all, instead of to an hotel, for so short a time?'

He explained as well as he was able.

'You wanted to see something of French life, and French artists or writers?' she repeated slowly, 'and you come with

introductions from Xavier Dubois! *C'est drôle, ça.* Have you studied art?'

He laughed.

'No—except in books.'

'What books?'

'Novels—George Sand's.'

It was her turn to laugh now.

'You are really too amusing! No, Monsieur, no; you interest me. I have the best will in the world towards you; but I cannot ask Consuelos and Teverinos to meet you. *Pas possible.* I regret—'

She fell into silence a moment, studying him with a merry look. Then she broke out again.

'Are you a connoisseur in pictures, Monsieur?'

He had reddened already under her *persiflage.* At this he grew redder still.

'I have never seen any, Mademoiselle,' he said, almost piteously; 'except once a little exhibition in Manchester.'

'Nor sculpture?'

'No,' he said honestly; 'nor sculpture.'

It seemed to him he was being held under a microscope, so keen and pitiless were her laughing eyes. But she left him no time to resent it.

'So you are a blank page, Monsieur—virgin soil—and you confess it. You interest me extremely. I should even like to teach you a little. I am the most ignorant person in the world. I know nothing about artists in books. *Mais je suis artiste, moi! fille d'artiste.* I could tell you tales—'

She threw her graceful head back against the cushion behind her, and smiled again broadly, as though her sense of humour were irresistibly tickled by the situation.

Then a whim seized her, and she sat up, grave and eager.

'I have drawn since I was eight years old,' she said; 'would you like to hear about it? It is not romantic—not the least in the world—but it is true.'

And with what seemed to his foreign ear a marvellous swiftness and fertility of phrase, she poured out her story. After her mother died she had been sent at eight years old to board at a farm near Rouen by her father, who seemed to have regarded his daughter now as plaything and model, now as an intolerable drag on the freedom of a vicious career. And at the farm the child's gift declared itself. She began with copying the illustrations, the saints and holy families in a breviary belonging to one of the farm servants; she went on to draw the lambs, the carts, the horses, the farm buildings, on any piece of white wood she could find littered about the yard, or any bit of paper saved from a parcel, till at last the old curé took pity upon her and gave her some chalks and a drawing-book. At fourteen her father, for a caprice, reclaimed her, and she found herself alone with him in Paris. To judge from the hints she threw out, her life during

the next few years had been of the roughest and wildest, protected only by her indomitable resolve to learn, to make herself an artist, come what would. 'I meant to be *famous*, and I mean it still!' she said, with a passionate emphasis which made David open his eyes. Her father refused to believe in her gift, and was far too self-indulgent and brutal to teach her. But some of his artist friends were kind to her, and taught her intermittently; by the help of some of them she got permission, although under age, to copy in the Louvre, and with hardly any technical knowledge worked there feverishly from morning to night; and at last Taranne—the great Taranne, from whose *atelier* so many considerable artists had gone out to the conquest of the public—Taranne had seen some of her drawings, heard her story, and generously taken her as a pupil.

Then emulation took hold of her—the fierce desire to be first in all the competitions of the *atelier*. David had the greatest difficulty in following her rapid speech, with its slang, its technical idioms, its extravagance and variety; but he made out that she had been for a long time deficient in sound training, and that her rivals at the *atelier* had again and again beaten her easily in spite of her gift, because of her weakness in the grammar of her art.

'And whenever they beat me I could have killed my conquerors; and whenever I beat them, I despised my judges and wanted to give the prize away. It is not my fault. *Je suis faite comme ça—voilà!* I am as vain as a peacock; yet when people admire anything I do, I think them fools—*fools!* I am jealous and proud and absurd—so they all say; yet a word, a look from a real artist—from one of the great men who *know*—can break me, make me cry. *Démêlez ça, Monsieur, si vous pouvez!*'

She stopped, out of breath. Their eyes were on each other. The fascination, the absorption expressed in the Englishman's look startled her. She hurriedly turned away, took up her cigarette again, and nestled into the cushion. He vainly tried to clothe some of the quick comments running through his mind in adequate French, could find nothing but the most commonplace phrases, stammered out a few, and then blushed afresh. In her pity for him she took up her story again.

After her father's sudden death, the shelter, such as it was, of his name and companionship was withdrawn. What was she to do? It turned out that she possessed a small *rente* which had belonged to her mother, and which her father had never been able to squander. Two relations from her mother's country near Bordeaux turned up to claim her, a country doctor and his sister—middle-aged, devout—to her wild eyes at least, altogether forbidding.

'They made too much of their self-sacrifice in taking me to live with them,' she said with her little ringing laugh. 'I said to them—"My good uncle and aunt, it is too much—no one could have the right to lay such a burden upon you. Go home

and forget me. I am incorrigible. I am an artist. I mean to live by myself, and work for myself. I am sure to go to the bad—good morning." They went home and told the rest of my mother's people that I was insane. But they could not keep my money from me. It is just enough for me. Besides, I shall be selling soon,—certainly I shall be selling! I have had two or three inquiries already about one of the exhibits in the Salon. Now then—*talk*, Monsieur David!' and she emphasised the words by a little frown; 'it is your turn.'

And gradually by skill and patience she made him talk, made him give her back some of her confidences. It seemed to amuse her greatly that he should be a bookseller. She knew no booksellers in Paris; she could assure him they were all pure *bourgeois*, and there was not one of them that could be likened to Donatello's David. Manchester she had scarcely heard of; she shook her fair head over it. But when he told her of his French reading, when he waxed eloquent about Rousseau and George Sand, then her mirth became uncontrollable.

'You came to France to talk of Rousseau and George Sand?' she asked him with dancing eyes—'*Mon Dieu! mon Dieu!* what do you take us for?

This time his vanity was hurt. He asked her to tell him what she meant—why she laughed at him.

'I will do better than that,' she said; 'I will get some friend of mine to take you to-morrow to "Les Trois Rats."'

'What is "Les Trois Rats"?' he asked, half wounded and half mystified.

'"Les Trois Rats," Monsieur, is an artist's café. It is famous, it is characteristic; if you are in search of local colour you must certainly go there. When you come back you will have some fresh ideas, I promise you.'

He asked if ladies also went there.

'Some do; I don't. Conventions mean nothing to me, as you perceive, or I should have a companion here to play propriety. But like you, perhaps, I am Romantic. I believe in the grand style. I have ideas as to how men should treat me. I can read Octave Feuillet. I have a terrible weakness for those *cavaliers* of his. And garbage makes me ill. So I avoid the "Trois Rats."'

She fell silent, resting her little chin on her hand. Then with a sudden sly smile she bent forward and looked him in the eyes.

'Are you pious, Monsieur, like all the English? There is some religion left in your country, isn't there?'

'Yes, certainly,' he admitted, 'there was a good deal.'

Then, hesitating, he described his own early reading of Voltaire, watching its effect upon her, afraid lest here too he should say something fatuous, behind the time, as he seemed to have been doing all through.

'Voltaire!'—she shrugged her little shoulders—'Voltaire to me is just an old *perruque*—a prating philanthropical person who talked about *le bon Dieu*, and wrote just what every

bourgeois can understand. If he had had his will and swept away the clergy and the Church, how many fine subjects we artists should have lost!'

He sat helplessly staring at her. She enjoyed his perplexity a minute; then she returned to the charge.

'Well, my credo is very short. Its first article is art—and its second is art—and its third is art!'

Her words excited her. The delicate colour flushed into her cheek. She flung her head back and looked straight before her with half-shut eyes.

'Yes—I believe in art—and expression—and colour—and *le vrai.* Velazquez is my God, and—and he has too many prophets to mention! I was devout once for three months—since then I have never had as much faith of the Church sort as would lie on a ten-sous piece. But'—with a sudden whimsical change of voice—'I am as credulous as a Breton fisherman, and as superstitious as a gipsy! Wait and see. Will you look at my pictures?'

She sprang up and showed her sketches. She had been a winter in Algiers, and had there and in Spain taken a passion for the East, for its colour, its mystery, its suggestions of cruelty and passion. She chattered away, explaining, laughing, haranguing, and David followed her submissively from thing to thing, dumb with the interest and curiosity of this new world and language of the artist.

Louie meanwhile, who, after the refreshment of supper, had been forgetting both her fatigue and the other two in the entertainment provided her by the shoes and the Oriental dresses, had now found a little inlaid coffer on a distant table, full of Algerian trinkets, and was examining them. Suddenly a loud crash was heard from her neighbourhood.

Elise Delaunay stood still. Her quick speech died on her lips. She made one bound forward to Louie; then, with a cry, she turned deathly pale, tottered, and would have fallen, but that David ran to her.

'The glass is broken,' she said, or rather gasped; 'she has broken it—that old Venetian glass of Maman's. Oh! my pictures!—my pictures! How can I undo it? *Je suis perdue!* Oh go!—go!—*go*—both of you! Leave me alone! Why did I ever see you?'

She was beside herself with rage and terror. She laid hold of Louie, who stood in sullen awkwardness and dismay, and pushed her to the door so suddenly and so violently that the stronger, taller girl yielded without an attempt at resistance. Then holding the door open, she beckoned imperiously to David, while the tears streamed down her cheeks.

'Adieu, Monsieur—say nothing—there is nothing to be said—go!'

He went out bewildered, and the two in their amazement walked mechanically to their own door.

'She is mad!' said Louie, her eyes blazing, when they paused and looked at each other. 'She must be mad. What did she say?'

'What happened?' was all he could reply.

'I threw down that old glass—it wasn't my fault—I didn't see it. It was standing on the floor against a chair. I moved the chair back just a trifle, and it fell. A shabby old thing—I could have paid for another easily. Well, I'm not going there again to be treated like that.'

The girl was furious. All that chafed sense of exclusion and slighted importance which had grown upon her during David's *tête-à-tête* with their strange hostess came to violent expression in her resentment. She opened the door of their room, saying that whatever he might do she was going to bed and to sleep somewhere, if it was on the floor.

David made a melancholy light in the squalid room, and Louie went about her preparations in angry silence. When she had withdrawn into the little cupboard-room, saying carelessly that she supposed he could manage with one of the bags and his great coat, he sat down on the edge of the bare iron bedstead, and recognised with a start that he was quivering all over—with fatigue, or excitement? His chief feeling perhaps was one of utter discomfiture, flatness, and humiliation.

He had sat there in the dark without moving for some minutes, when his ear caught a low uncertain tapping at the door. His heart leapt. He sprang up and turned the key in an instant.

There on the landing stood Elise Delaunay, her arms filled with what looked like a black bearskin rug, her small tremulous face and tear-wet eyes raised to his.

'*Pardon*, Monsieur,' she said hurriedly. 'I told you I was superstitious—well, now you see. Will you take this rug?—one can sleep anywhere with it though it is so old. And has your sister what she wants? Can I do anything for her? No! *Alors*—I must talk to you about her in the morning. I have some more things in my head to say. *Pardon!—et bonsoir.*'

She pushed the rug into his hands. He was so moved that he let it drop on the floor unheeding, and as she looked at him, half audacious, half afraid, she saw a painful struggle, as of some strange new birth, pass across his dark young face. They stood so a moment, looking at each other. Then he made a quick step forward with some inarticulate words. In an instant she was halfway along the corridor, and, turning back so that her fair hair and smiling eyes caught the light she held, she said to him with the queenliest gesture of dismissal:

'*Au revoir*, Monsieur David, sleep well.'

CHAPTER III

DAVID woke early from a restless sleep. He sprang up and dressed. Never had the May sun shone so brightly; never had life looked more alluring.

In the first place he took care to profit by the hints of the night before. He ran down to make friends with Madame Merichat—a process which was accomplished without much difficulty, as soon as a franc or two had passed, and arrangements had been made for the passing of a few more. She was to take charge of the *appartement*, and provide them with their morning coffee and bread. And upon this her grim countenance cleared. She condescended to spend a quarter of an hour gossiping with the Englishman, and she promised to stand as a buffer between him and Dubois' irate landlord.

'A job of work at Brussels, you say, Monsieur? *Bien;* I will tell the *propriétaire.* He won't believe it—Monsieur Dubois tells too many lies; but perhaps it will keep him quiet. He will think of the return—of the money in the pocket. He will bid me inform him the very moment Monsieur Dubois shows his nose, that he may descend upon him, and so you will be let alone.'

He mounted the stairs again, and stood a moment looking along the passage with a quickening pulse. There was a sound of low singing, as of one crooning over some occupation. It must be she! Then she had recovered her trouble of the night before—her strange trouble. Yet he dimly remembered that in the farm-houses of the Peak also the breaking of a looking-glass had been held to be unlucky. And, of course, in interpreting the omen she had thought of her pictures and the jury.

How could he see her again? Suddenly it occurred to him that she had spoken of taking a holiday since the Salon opened. A holiday which for her meant 'copying in the Louvre.' And where else, pray, does the tourist naturally go on the first morning of a visit to Paris?

The young fellow went back into his room with a radiant face, and spent some minutes, as Louie had not yet appeared, in elaborating his toilette. The small cracked glass above the mantelpiece was not flattering, and David was almost for the first time anxious about and attentive to what he saw there. Yet, on the whole, he was pleased with his short serge coat and his new tie. He thought they gave him something of a student air, and would not disgrace even *her* should she deign to be seen in his company. As he laid his brush down he looked at his own brown hand, and remembered hers with a kind of wonder—so small and white, the wrist so delicately rounded.

When Louie emerged she was not in a good temper. She declared that she had hardly slept a wink; that the bed was not fit to sleep on; that the cupboard was alive with mice, and smelt intolerably. David first endeavoured to appease her with the

coffee and rolls which had just arrived, and then he broached the plan of sending her to board with the Cervins, which Mademoiselle Delaunay had suggested. What did she think? It would cost more, perhaps, but he could afford it. On their way out he would deliver the two notes of introduction, and no doubt they could settle it directly if she liked.

Louie yawned, put up objections, and refused to see anything in a promising light. Paris was horrid, and the man who had let them the rooms ought to be 'had up.' As for people who couldn't talk any English she hated the sight of them.

The remark from an Englishwoman in France had its humour. But David did not see that point of it. He flushed hotly, and with difficulty held an angry tongue. However, he was possessed with an inward dread—the dread of the idealist who sees his pleasure as a beautiful whole—lest they should so quarrel as to spoil the visit and the new experience. Under this curb he controlled himself, and presently, with more *savoir vivre* than he was conscious of, proposed that they should go out and see the shops.

Louie, at the mere mention of shops, passed into another mood. After she had spent some time on dressing they sallied forth, David delivering his notes on the way down. Both noticed that the house was squalid and ill-kept, but apparently full of inhabitants. David surmised that they were for the most part struggling persons of small means and extremely various occupations. There were three *ateliers* in the building, the two on their own top floor, and M. Montjoie's, which was apparently built out at the back on the ground floor. The first floor was occupied by a dressmaker, the *propriétaire's* best tenant, according to Madame Merichat. Above her was a clerk in the Ministry of the Interior, with his wife and two or three children; above them again the Cervins, and a couple of commercial travellers, and so on.

The street outside, in its general aspect, suggested the same small, hard-pressed professional life. It was narrow and dull; it mounted abruptly towards the hill of Montmartre, with its fort and cemetery, and, but for the height of the houses, which is in itself a dignified architectural feature, would have been no more inspiriting than a street in London.

A few steps, however, brought them on to the Boulevard Montmartre, and then, taking the Rue Lafitte, they emerged upon the Boulevard des Italiens.

Louie looked round her, to this side and that, paused for a moment, bewildered as it were by the general movement and gaiety of the scene. Then a *lingerie* shop caught her eye, and she made for it. Soon the last cloud had cleared from the girl's brow. She gave herself with ecstasy to the shops, to the people. What jewellery, what dresses, what delicate cobwebs of lace and ribbon, what miracles of colour in the florists' windows, what suggestions of wealth and lavishness everywhere! Here in this world of costly contrivance, of an eager and inventive luxury,

Louise Suveret's daughter felt herself at last at home. She had never set foot in it before; yet already it was familiar, and she was part of it.

Yes, she was as well dressed as anybody, she concluded, except perhaps the ladies in the closed carriages whose dress could only be guessed at. As for good looks, there did not seem to be much of *them* in Paris. She called the Frenchwomen downright plain. They knew how to put on their clothes; there was style about them, she did not deny that; but she was prepared to maintain that there was hardly a decent face among them.

Such air, and such a sky! The trees were rushing into leaf; summer dresses were to be seen everywhere; the shops had swung out their awnings, and the day promised a summer heat still tempered by a fresh spring breeze. For a time David was content to lounge along, stopping when his companion did, lost as she was in the enchantment and novelty of the scene, drinking in Paris as it were at great gulps, saying to himself they would be at the Opera directly, then the Théâtre-Français, the Louvre, the Tuileries, the Place de la Concorde! Every book that had ever passed through his hands containing illustrations and descriptions of Paris he had read with avidity. He, too, like Louie, though in a different way, was at home in these streets, and hardly needed a look at the map he carried to find his way. Presently, when he could escape from Louie, he would go and explore to his heart's content, see all that the tourist sees, and then penetrate further, and judge for himself as to those sweeping and iconoclastic changes which, for its own tyrant's purposes, the Empire had been making in the older city. As he thought of the Emperor and the government his gorge rose within him. Barbier's talk had insensibly determined all his ideas of the imperial régime. How much longer would France suffer the villainous gang who ruled her? He began an inward declamation in the manner of Hugo, exciting himself as he walked—while all the time it was the spring of 1870 which was swelling and expanding in the veins and branches of the plane trees above him—May was hurrying on, and Wörth lay three short months ahead!

Then suddenly into the midst of his political musings and his traveller's ardour the mind thrust forward a disturbing image—the figure of a little fair-haired artist. He looked round impatiently. Louie's loiterings began to chafe him.

'Come along, do,' he called to her, waking up to the time; 'we shall never get there.'

'Where?' she demanded.

'Why, to the Louvre.'

'What's there to see there?'

'It's a great palace. The Kings of France used to live there once. Now they've put pictures and statues into it. You must see it, Louie—everybody does. Come along.'

'I'll not hurry,' she said perversely. 'I don't care *that* about silly old pictures.'

And she went back to her shop-gazing. David felt for a moment precisely as he had been used to feel in the old days on the Scout, when he had tried to civilise her on the question of books. And now as then he had to wrestle with her, using the kind of arguments he felt might have a chance with her. At last she sulkily gave way, and let him lead on at a quick pace. In the Rue Saint-Honoré, indeed, she was once more almost unmanageable; but at last they were safely on the stairs of the Louvre, and David's brow smoothed, his eye shone again. He mounted the interminable steps with such gaiety and eagerness that Louie's attention was drawn to him.

'Whatever do you go that pace for?' she said crossly. 'It's enough to kill anybody going up this kind of thing!'

'It isn't as bad as the Downfall,' said David, laughing, 'and I've seen you get up that fast enough. Come, catch hold of my umbrella and I'll drag you up.'

Louie reached the top, out of breath, turned into the first room to the right, and looked scornfully round her.

'Well I never!' she ejaculated. 'What's the good of this?'

Meanwhile David shot on ahead, beckoning to her to follow. She, however, would take her own pace, and walked sulkily along, looking at the people who were not numerous enough to please her, and only regaining a certain degree of serenity when she perceived that here as elsewhere people turned to stare after her.

David meanwhile threw wondering glances at the great Veronese, at Raphael's archangel, at the towering Vandyke, at the 'Virgin of the Rocks.' But he passed them by quickly. Was she here? Could he find her in this wilderness of rooms? His spirits wavered between delicious expectancy and the fear of disappointment. The gallery seemed to him full of copyists young and old: beardless *rapins* laughing and chatting with fresh maidens; old men sitting crouched on high seats with vast canvases before them; or women, middle-aged and plain, with knitted shawls round their shoulders, at work upon the radiant Greuzes and Lancrets; but that pale golden head—nowhere!

At last!

He hurried forward, and there, in front of a Velazquez, he found her, in the company of two young men, who were leaning over the back of her chair criticising the picture on her easel.

'Ah, Monsieur David!'

She took up the brush she held with her teeth for a moment, and carelessly held him out two fingers of her right hand.

'Monsieur—make a diversion—tell the truth—these gentlemen here have been making a fool of me.'

And throwing herself back with a little laughing, coquettish gesture, she made room for him to look.

'Ah, but I forgot; let me present you. M. Alphonse, this is an Englishman; he is new to Paris, and he is an acquaintance of mine. You are not to play any joke upon him. M. Lenain, this gentleman wishes to be made acquainted with art; you will

undertake his education—you will take him to-night to "Les Trois Rats." I promised for you.'

She threw a merry look at the elder of her two attendants, who ceremoniously took off his hat to David and made a polite speech, in which the word *enchanté* recurred. He was a dark man, with a short black beard, and full restless eye; some ten years older apparently than the other, who was a dare-devil boy of twenty.

'*Allons!* tell me what you think of my picture, M. David.'

The three waited for the answer, not without malice. David looked at it perplexed. It was a copy of the black and white Infanta, with the pink rosettes, which, like everything else that France possesses from the hand of Velazquez, is to the French artist of to-day among the sacred things, the flags and battle-cries of his art. Its strangeness, its unlikeness to anything of the picture kind that his untrained provincial eyes had ever lit upon, tied his tongue. Yet he struggled with himself.

'Mademoiselle, I cannot explain—I cannot find the words. It seems to me ugly. The child is not pretty nor the dress. But—'

He stared at the picture, fascinated—unable to express himself, and blushing under the shame of his incapacity.

The other three watched him curiously.

'Taranne should get hold of him,' the elder artist murmured to his companion, with an imperceptible nod towards the Englishman. 'The models lately have been too common. There was a rebellion yesterday in the *atelier de femmes;* one and all declared the model was not worth drawing, and one and all left.'

'Minxes!' said the other coolly, a twinkle in his wild eye. 'Taranne will have to put his foot down. There are one or two demons among them; one should make them know their place.'

Lenain threw back his head and laughed—a great, frank laugh, which broke up the ordinary discontent of the face agreeably. The speaker, M. Alphonse Duchatel, had been already turned out of two *ateliers* for a series of the most atrocious *charges* on record. He was now with Taranne, on trial, the authorities keeping a vigilant eye on him.

Meanwhile Elise, still leaning back with her eyes on her picture, was talking fast to David, who hung over her, absorbed. She was explaining to him some of the Infanta's qualities, pointing to this and that with her brush, talking a bright, untranslatable artist's language which dazzled him, filled him with an exciting medley of new impressions and ideas, while all the time his quick sense responded with a delightful warmth and eagerness to the personality beside him—child, prophetess, egotist, all in one—noticing each characteristic detail, the drooping, melancholy trick of the eyes, the nervous delicacy of the small hand holding the brush.

'David—*David!* I'm tired of this, I tell you! I'm not going to stay, so I thought I'd come and tell you. Good-bye!'

He turned abruptly, and saw Louie standing defiantly a few paces behind him.

'What do you want, Louie?' he said impatiently, going up to her. It was no longer the same man, the same voice.

'I want to go. I hate this!'

'I'm not ready, and you can't go by yourself. Do you see'—(in an undertone)—'this is Mademoiselle Delaunay?'

'That don't matter,' she said sulkily, making no movement. 'If you ain't going, I am.'

By this time, however, Elise, as well as the two artists, had perceived Louie's advent. She got up from her seat with a slight sarcastic smile, and held out her hand.

'*Bonjour*, Mademoiselle! You forgave me for dat I did last night? I ask your pardon—oh, *de tout mon cœur!*'

Even Louie perceived that the tone was enigmatical. She gave an inward gulp of envy, however, excited by the cut of the French girl's black and white cotton. Then she dropped Elise's hand, and moved away.

'Louie!' cried David, pursuing her in despair; 'now just wait half an hour, there's a good girl, while I look at a few things, and then afterwards I'll take you to the street where all the best shops are, and you can look at them as much as you like.'

Louie stood irresolute.

'What is it?' said Elise to him in French. 'Your sister wants to go? Why, you have only just come!'

'She finds it dull looking at pictures,' said David, with an angry brow, controlling himself with difficulty. 'She must have the shops.'

Elise shrugged her shoulders and, turning her head, said a few quick words that David did not follow to the two men behind her. They all laughed. The artists, however, were both much absorbed in Louie's appearance, and could not apparently take their eyes off her.

'Ah!' said Elise, suddenly.

She had recognised some one at a distance, to whom she nodded. Then she turned and looked at the English girl, laughed, and caught her by the wrist.

'Monsieur David, here are Monsieur and Madame Cervin. Have you thought of sending your sister to them? If so, I will present you. Why not? They would amuse her. Madame Cervin would take her to all the shops, to the races, to the Bois. *Que sais-je?*'

All the while she was looking from one to the other. David's face cleared. He thought he saw a way out of this *impasse*.

'Louie, come here a moment. I want to speak to you.'

And he carried her off a few yards, while the Cervins came up and greeted the group round the Infanta. A powerfully built, thickset man, in a grey suit, who had been walking with them, fell back as they joined Elise Delaunay, and began to examine a Pieter de Hooghe with minuteness.

Meanwhile David wrestled with his sister. She had much better let Mademoiselle Delaunay arrange with these people.

Then Madame Cervin could take her about wherever she wanted to go. He would make a bargain to that effect. As for him, he must and would see Paris—pictures, churches, public buildings. If the Louvre bored her, everything would bore her, and it was impossible either that he should spend his time at her apron-string, flattening his nose against the shop-windows, or that she should go about alone. He was not going to have her taken for 'a bad lot,' and treated accordingly, he told her frankly, with an imperious tightening of all his young frame. He had discovered some time since that it was necessary to be plain with Louie.

She hated to be disposed of on any occasion, except by her own will and initiative, and she still made difficulties for the sake of making them, till he grew desperate. Then, when she had pushed his patience to the very last point, she gave way.

'You tell her she's to do as I want her,' she said, threateningly. 'I won't stay if she doesn't. And I'll not have her paid too much.'

David led her back to the rest.

'My sister consents. Arrange it if you can, Mademoiselle,' he said imploringly to Elise.

A series of quick and somewhat noisy colloquies followed, watched with disapproval by the *gardien* near, who seemed to be once or twice on the point of interfering.

Mademoiselle Delaunay opened the matter to Madame Cervin, a short, stout woman, with no neck, and a keen, small eye. Money was her daily and hourly preoccupation, and she could have kissed the hem of Elise Delaunay's dress in gratitude for these few francs thus placed in her way. It was some time now since she had lost her last boarder, and had not been able to obtain another. She took David aside, and, while her look sparkled with covetousness, explained to him volubly all that she would do for Louie, and for how much. And she could talk some English too—certainly she could. Her education had been *excellent*, she was thankful to say.

'*Mon Dieu*, *qu'elle est belle !*' she wound up. 'Ah, Monsieur, you do very right to entrust your sister to me. A young fellow like you—no !—that is not *convenable*. But I—I will be a dragon. Make your mind quite easy. With me all will go well.'

Louie stood in an impatient silence while she was being thus talked over, exchanging looks from time to time with the two artists, who had retired a little behind Mademoiselle Delaunay's easel, and from that distance were perfectly competent to let the bold-eyed English girl know what they thought of her charms.

At last the bargain was concluded, and the Cervins walked away with Louie in charge. They were to take her to a restaurant, then show her the Rue Royale and the Rue de la Paix, and, finally—David making no demur whatever about the expense—there was to be an afternoon excursion through the Bois to Longchamps, where some of the May races were being run.

As they receded, the man in grey, before the Pieter de Hooghe,

looked up, smiled, dropped his eyeglass, and resumed his place beside Madame Cervin. She made a gesture of introduction, and he bowed across her to the young stranger.

For the first time Elise perceived him. A look of annoyance and disgust crossed her face.

'Do you see,' she said, turning to Lenain; 'there is that animal, Montjoie? He did well to keep his distance. What do the Cervins want with him?'

The others shrugged their shoulders.

'They say his Mænad would be magnificent if he could keep sober enough to finish her,' said Lenain; 'it is his last chance; he will go under altogether if he fails; he is almost done for already.'

'And what a gift!' said Alphonse, in a lofty tone of critical regret. 'He should have been a second Barye. *Ah, la vie Parisienne—la maudite vie Parisienne!*'

Again Lenain exploded.

'Come and lunch, you idiot,' he said, taking the lad's arm; 'for whom are you posing?'

But before they departed, they inquired of David in the politest way what they could do for him. He was a stranger to Mdlle. Delaunay's acquaintance; they were at his service. Should they take him somewhere at night? David, in an effusion of gratitude, suggested 'Les Trois Rats.' He desired greatly to see the artist world, he said. Alphonse grinned. An appointment was made for eight o'clock, and the two friends walked off.

CHAPTER IV

David and Elise Delaunay thus found themselves left alone. She stood a moment irresolutely before her canvas, then sat down again, and took up her brushes.

'I cannot thank you enough, Mademoiselle,' the young fellow began shyly, while the hand which held his stick trembled a little. 'We could never have arranged that affair for ourselves.'

She coloured and bent over her canvas.

'I don't know why I troubled myself,' she said, in a curious irritable way.

'Because you are kind!' he cried, his charming smile breaking. 'Because you took pity on a pair of strangers, like the guardian angel that you are!'

The effect of the foreign language on him leading him to a more set and literary form of expression than he would have naturally used, was clearly marked in the little outburst.

Elise bit her lip, frowned and fidgeted, and presently looked him straight in the face.

'Monsieur David, warn your sister that that man with the Cervins this morning—the man in grey, the sculptor, M. Montjoie—is a disreputable scoundrel that no decent woman should know.'

David was taken aback.

'And Madame Cervin—'

Elise raised her shoulders.

'I don't offer a solution,' she said ; 'but I have warned you.'

'Monsieur Cervin has a somewhat strange appearance,' said David, hesitating.

And, in fact, while the negotiations had been going on there had stood beside the talkers a shabby, slouching figure of a man, with longish grizzled hair and a sleepy eye—a strange, remote creature, who seemed to take very little notice of what was passing before him. From various indications, however, in the conversation, David had gathered that this looker-on must be the former *prix de Rome*.

Elise explained that Monsieur Cervin was the wreck of a genius. In his youth he had been the chosen pupil of Ingres and Hippolyte Flandrin, had won the *prix de Rome*, and after his three years in the Villa Medicis had come home to take up what was expected to be a brilliant career. Then for some mysterious reason he had suddenly gone under, disappeared from sight, and the waves of Paris had closed over him. When he reappeared he was broken in health, and married to a retired modiste, upon whose money he was living. He painted bad pictures intermittently, but spent most of his time in hanging about his old haunts—the Louvre, the Salon, the various exhibitions, and the dealers, where he was commonly regarded by the younger artists who were on speaking terms with him as a tragic old bore, with a head of his own worth painting, however, if he could be got to sit—for an augur or a chief priest.

'It was *absinthe* that did it,' said Elise calmly, taking a fresh charge into her brush, and working away at the black trimmings of the Infanta's dress. 'Every day, about four, he disappears into the Boulevard. Generally, Madame Cervin drives him like a sheep ; but when four o'clock comes she daren't interfere with him. If she did, he would be unmanageable altogether. So he takes his two hours or so, and when he comes back there is not much amiss with him. Sometimes he is excited, and talks quite brilliantly about the past—sometimes he is nervous and depressed, starts at a sound, and storms about the noises in the street. Then she hurries him off to bed, and next morning he is quite meek again, and tries to paint. But his hand shakes, and he can't see. So he gives it up, and calls to her to put on her things. Then they wander about Paris, till four o'clock comes round again, and he gives her the slip—always with some elaborate pretence or other. Oh ! she takes it quietly. Other vices might give her more trouble.'

The tone conveyed the affectation of a complete knowledge of the world, which saw no reason whatever to be ashamed of itself. The girl was just twenty, but she had lived for years, first with a disreputable father, and then in a perpetual *camaraderie*, within the field of art, with men of all sorts and kinds. There are

certain feminine blooms which a *milieu* like this effaces with deadly rapidity.

For the first time David was jarred. The idealist in him recoiled. His conscience, too, was roused about Louie. He had handed her over, it seemed, to the custody of a drunkard and his wife, who had immediately thrown her into the company of a man no decent woman ought to know. And Mademoiselle Delaunay had led him into it. The guardian angel speech of a few moments before rang in his ears uncomfortably.

Moreover, whatever rebellions his young imagination might harbour, whatever license in his eyes the great passions might claim, he had maintained for months and years past a practical asceticism, which had left its mark. The young man who had starved so gaily on sixpence a day that he might read and learn, had nothing but impatience and disgust for the glutton and the drunkard. It was a kind of physical repulsion. And the woman's light indulgent tone seemed for a moment to divide them.

Elise looked round. Why this silence in her companion?

In an instant she divined him. Perhaps her own conscience was not easy. Why had she meddled in the young Englishman's affairs at all? For a whim? Out of a mere good-natured wish to rid him of his troublesome sister; or because his handsome looks, his *naïveté*, and his eager admiration of herself amused and excited her, and she did not care to be baulked of them so soon? At any rate, she found refuge in an outburst of temper.

'Ah!' she said, after a moment's pause and scrutiny. 'I see! You think I might have done better for your sister than send her to lodge with a drunkard—that I need not have taken so much trouble to give you good advice for that! You repent your little remarks about guardian angels! You are disappointed in me!—you distrust me!'

She turned back to her easel and began to paint with headlong speed, the small hand flashing to and fro, the quick breath rising and falling tempestuously.

He was dismayed—afraid, and he began to make excuses both for himself and her. It would be all right; he should be close by, and if there were trouble he could take his sister away.

She let her brushes fall into her lap with an exclamation.

'Listen!' she said to him, her eyes blazing—why, he could not for the life of him understand. 'There will be no trouble. What I told you means nothing open—or disgusting. Your sister will notice nothing unless you tell her. But I was candid with you—I always am. I told you last night that I had no scruples. You thought it was a woman's exaggeration; it was the literal truth! If a man drinks, or is vicious, so long as he doesn't hurl the furniture at my head, or behave himself offensively to me, what does it matter to me! If he drinks so that he can't paint, and he wants to paint, well!—then he seems to me another instance of the charming way in which a kind Providence has arranged this world. I am sorry for him, *tout bonnement!* If I could give the

poor devil a hand out of the mud, I would; if not, well, then, no sermons! I take him as I find him; if he annoys me, I call in the police. But as to hiding my face and canting, not at all! That is your English way—it is the way of our *bourgeoisie*. It is not mine. I don't belong to the respectables—I would sooner kill myself a dozen times over. I can't breathe in their company. I know how to protect myself; none of the men I meet dare to insult me; that is my idiosyncrasy—everyone has his own. But I have my ideas, and nobody else matters a fig to me.—So now, Monsieur, if you regret our forced introduction of last night, let me wish you a good morning. It will be perfectly easy for your sister to find some excuse to leave the Cervins. I can give you the addresses of several cheap hotels where you and she will be extremely comfortable, and where neither I nor Monsieur Cervin will annoy you!'

David stared at her. He had grown very pale. She, too, was white to the lips. The violence and passion of her speech had exhausted her; her hands trembled in her lap. A wave of emotion swept through him. Her words were insolently bitter. Why, then, this impression of something wounded and young and struggling—at war with itself and the world, proclaiming loneliness and *Sehnsucht*, while it flung anger and reproach?

He dropped on one knee, hardly knowing what he did. Most of the students about had left their work for a while; no one was in sight but a *gardien*, whose back was turned to them, and a young man in the remote distance. He picked up a brush she had let fall, pressed it into her reluctant hand, and laid his forehead against the hand for an instant.

'You misunderstand me,' he said, with a broken, breathless utterance. 'You are quite wrong—quite mistaken. There are not such thoughts in me as you think. The world matters nothing to me, either. I am alone, too; I have always been alone. You meant everything that was heavenly and kind—you must have meant it. I am a stupid idiot! But I could be your friend—if you would permit it.'

He spoke with an extraordinary timidity and slowness. He forgot all his scruples, all pride—everything. As he knelt there, so close to her delicate slimness, to the curls on her white neck, to the quivering lips and great, defiant eyes, she seemed to him once more a being of another clay from himself—beyond any criticism his audacity could form. He dared hardly touch her, and in his heart there swelled the first irrevocable wave of young passion.

She raised her hand impetuously and began to paint again. But suddenly a tear dropped on to her knee. She brushed it away, and her wild smile broke.

'Bah!' she said, 'what a scene, what a pair of children! What was it all about? I vow I haven't an idea. You are an excellent *farceur*, Monsieur David! One can see well that you have read George Sand.'

He sat down on a little three-legged stool she had brought

with her, and held her box open on his knee. In a minute or two they were talking as though nothing had happened. She was giving him a fresh lecture on Velazquez, and he had resumed his *rôle* of pupil and listener. But their eyes avoided each other, and once when, in taking a tube from the box he held, her fingers brushed against his hand, she flushed involuntarily and moved her chair a foot further away.

'Who is that?' she asked, suddenly looking round the corner of her canvas. '*Mon Dieu!* M. Regnault! How does he come here? They told me he was at Granada.'

She sat transfixed, a joyous excitement illuminating every feature. And there, a few yards from them, examining the Rembrandt 'Supper at Emmaus' with a minute and absorbed attention, was the young man he had noticed in the distance a few minutes before. As Elise spoke, the new-comer apparently heard his name, and turned. He put up his eyeglass, smiled, and took off his hat.

'Mademoiselle Delaunay! I find you where I left you, at the feet of the master! Always at work! You are indefatigable. Taranne tells me great things of you. "Ah," he says, "if the men would work like the women!" I assure you, he makes us smart for it. May I look? Good—very good! a great improvement on last year—stronger, more knowledge in it. That hand wants study—but you will soon put it right. Ah, Velazquez! That a man should be great, one can bear that, but so great! It is an offence to the rest of us mortals. But one cannot realise him out of Madrid. I often sigh for the months I spent copying in the Museo. There is a repose of soul in copying a great master—don't you find it? One rests from one's own efforts awhile—the spirit of the master descends into yours, gently, profoundly.'

He stood beside her, smiling kindly, his hat and gloves in his hands, perfectly dressed, an air of the great world about his look and bearing which differentiated him wholly from all other persons whom David had yet seen in Paris. In physique, too, he was totally unlike the ordinary Parisian type. He was a young athlete, vigorous, robust, broad-shouldered, tanned by sun and wind. Only his blue eye—so subtle, melancholy, passionate—revealed the artist and the thinker.

Elise was evidently transported by his notice of her. She talked to him eagerly of his pictures in the Salon, especially of a certain 'Salome,' which, as David presently gathered, was the sensation of the year. She raved about the qualities of it—the words colour, poignancy, force recurring in the quick phrases.

'No one talks of your *success* now, Monsieur. It is another word. *C'est la gloire elle-même qui vous parle à l'oreille!*'

As she let fall the most characteristic of all French nouns, a slight tremor passed across the young man's face. But the look which succeeded it was one of melancholy; the blue eyes took a steely hardness.

'Perhaps a lying spirit, Mademoiselle. And what matter, so long as everything one does disappoints oneself? What a tyrant is art!—insatiable, adorable! You know it. We serve our king on our knees, and he deals us the most miserly gifts.'

'It is the service itself repays,' she said, eagerly, her chest heaving.

'True!—most true! But what a struggle always!—no rest—no content. And there is no other way. One must seek, grope, toil—then produce rapidly—in a flash—throw what you have done behind you—and so on to the next problem, and the next. There is no end to it—there never can be. But you hardly came here this morning, I imagine, Mademoiselle, to hear me prate! I wish you good day and good-bye. I came over for a look at the Salon, but to-morrow I go back to Spain. I can't breathe now for long away from my sun and my South! Adieu, Mademoiselle. I am told your prospects, when the voting comes on, are excellent. May the gods inspire the jury!'

He bowed, smiled, and passed on, carrying his lion-head and kingly presence down the gallery, which had now filled up again, and where, so David noticed, person after person turned as he came near with the same flash of recognition and pleasure he had seen upon Elise's face. A wild jealousy of the young conqueror invaded the English lad.

'Who is he?' he asked.

Elise, womanlike, divined him in a moment. She gave him a sidelong glance and went back to her painting.

'That,' she said quietly, 'is Henri Regnault. Ah, you know nothing of our painters. I can't make you understand. For me he is a young god—there is a halo round his head. He has grasped his fame—the fame we poor creatures are all thirsting for. It began last year with the Prim—General Prim on horseback—oh, magnificent!—a passion!—an energy! This year it is the "Salome." About—Gautier—all the world—have lost their heads over it. If you go to see it at the Salon, you will have to wait your turn. Crowds go every day for nothing else. Of course there are murmurs. They say the study of Fortuny has done him harm. Nonsense! People discuss him because he is becoming a master—no one discusses the nonentities. *They* have no enemies. Then he is sculptor, musician, athlete—well-born besides—all the world is his friend. But with it all so simple—*bon camarade* even for poor scrawlers like me. *Je l'adore!*'

'So it seems,' said David.

The girl smiled over her painting. But after a bit she looked up with a seriousness, nay, a bitterness, in her siren's face, which astonished him.

'It is not amusing to take you in—you are too ignorant. What do you suppose Henri Regnault matters to me? His world is as far above mine as Velazquez' art is above my art. But how can a foreigner understand our shades and grades? Nothing but *success*, but *la gloire*, could ever lift me into his world. Then

indeed I should be everybody's equal, and it would matter to nobody that I had been a Bohemian and a *déclassée.*'

She gave a little sigh of excitement, and threw her head back to look at her picture. David watched her.

'I thought,' he said ironically, 'that a few minutes ago you were all for Bohemia. I did not suspect these social ambitions.'

'All women have them—all artists deny them,' she said, recklessly. 'There, explain me as you like, Monsieur David. But don't read my riddle too soon, or I shall bore you. Allow me to ask you a question.'

She laid down her brushes and looked at him with the utmost gravity. His heart beat—he bent forward.

'Are you ever hungry, Monsieur David?'

He sprang up, half enraged, half ashamed.

'Where can we get some food?'

'That is my affair,' she said, putting up her brushes. 'Be humble, Monsieur, and take a lesson in Paris.'

And out they went together, he beside himself with the delight of accompanying her, and proudly carrying her box and satchel. How her little feet slipped in and out of her pretty dress—how, as they stood on the top of the great flight of stairs leading down into the court of the Louvre, the wind from outside blew back the curls from her brow, and ruffled the violets in her hat, the black lace about her tiny throat. It was an enchantment to follow and to serve her. She led him through the Tuileries Gardens and the Place de la Concorde to the Champs-Elysées. The fountains leapt in the sun; the river blazed between the great white buildings of its banks; to the left was the gilded dome of the Invalides, and the mass of the Corps Législatif, while in front of them rose the long ascent to the Arc de l'Etoile set in vivid green on either hand. Everywhere was space, glitter, magnificence. The gaiety of Paris entered into the Englishman, and took possession.

Presently, as they wandered up the Champs-Elysées, they passed a great building to the left. Elise stopped and clasped her hands in front of her with a little nervous, spasmodic gesture.

'That,' she said, 'is the Salon. My fate lies there. When we have had some food, I will take you in to see.'

She led him a little further up the Avenue, then took him aside through cunningly devised labyrinths of green till they came upon a little café restaurant among the trees, where people sat under an awning, and the wind drove the spray of a little fountain hither and thither among the bushes. It was gay, foreign, romantic, unlike anything David had ever seen in his northern world. He sat down, with Barbier's stories running in his head. Mademoiselle Delaunay was George Sand—independent, gifted, on the road to fame like that great *déclassée* of old; and he was her friend and comrade, a humble soldier, a camp follower, in the great army of letters.

Their meal was of the lightest. This descent on the Champs-

Elysées had been a freak on Elise's part, who wished to do nothing so *banal* as take her companion to the Palais Royal. But the restaurant she had chosen, though of a much humbler kind than those which the rich tourist commonly associates with this part of Paris, was still a good deal more expensive than she had rashly supposed. She opened her eyes gravely at the charges ; abused herself extravagantly for a lack of *savoir vivre ;* and both with one accord declared it was too hot to eat. But upon such eggs and such green peas as they did allow themselves—a *portion* of each, scrupulously shared—David at any rate, in his traveller's ardour, was prepared to live to the end of the chapter.

Afterwards, over the coffee and the cigarettes, Elise taking her part in both, they lingered for one of those hours which make the glamour of youth. Confidences flowed fast between them. His French grew suppler and more docile, answered more truly to the individuality behind it. He told her of his bringing up, of his wandering with the sheep on the mountains, of his reading among the heather, of 'Lias and his visions, of Hannah's cruelties and Louie's tempers—that same idyll of peasant life to which Dora had listened months before. But how differently told! Each different listener changes the tale, readjusts the tone. But here also the tale pleased. Elise, for all her leanings towards new schools in art, had the Romantic's imagination and the Romantic's relish for things foreign and unaccustomed. The English boy and his story seemed to her both charming and original. Her artist's eye followed the lines of the ruffled black head and noted the red-brown of the skin. She felt a wish to draw him—a wish which had entirely vanished in the case of Louie.

'Your sister has taken a dislike to me,' she said to him once, coolly. 'And as for me, I am afraid of her. Ah ! and she broke my glass !'

She shivered, and a look of anxiety and depression invaded her small face. He guessed that she was thinking of her pictures, and began timidly to speak to her about them. When they returned to the world of art, his fluency left him ; he felt crushed beneath the weight of his own ignorance and her accomplishment.

'Come and see them !' she said, springing up. 'I am tired of my Infanta. Let her be awhile. Come to the Salon, and I will show you "Salome." Or are you sick of pictures ? What do you want to see ? *Ça m'est égal.* I can always go back to my work.'

She spoke with a cavalier lightness which teased and piqued him.

'I wish to go where you go,' he said flushing, 'to see what you see.'

She shook her little head.

'No compliments, Monsieur David. We are serious persons, you and I. Well, then, for a couple of hours, *soyons camarades !*'

Of those hours, which prolonged themselves indefinitely, David's after remembrance was somewhat crowded and indistinct. He could never indeed think of Regnault's picture without a

shudder, so poignant was the impression it made upon him under the stimulus of Elise's nervous and passionate comments. It represented the daughter of Herodias resting after the dance, with the dish upon her knee which was to receive the head of the saint. Her mass of black hair—the first strong impression of the picture—stood out against the pale background, and framed the smiling sensual face, broadly and powerfully made, like the rest of the body, and knowing neither thought nor qualm. The colour was a bewilderment of scarlets and purples, of yellow and rose-colour, of turtle-greys and dazzling flesh-tints—bathed the whole of it in the searching light of the East. The strangeness, the science of it, its extraordinary brilliance and energy, combined with its total lack of all emotion, all pity, took indelible hold of the English lad's untrained provincial sense. He dreamt of it for nights afterwards.

For the rest—what whirl and confusion! He followed Elise through suffocating rooms, filled with the liveliest crowd he had ever seen. She was constantly greeted, surrounded, carried off to look at this and that. Her friends and acquaintances, indeed, whether men or women, seemed all to treat her in much the same way. There was complete, and often noisy, freedom of address and discussion between them. She called all the men by their surnames, and she was on half mocking, half caressing terms with the women, who seemed to David to be generally art students, of all ages and aspects. But nobody took any liberties with her. She had her place, and that one of some predominance. Clearly she had already the privileges of an eccentric, and a certain cool ascendency of temperament. Her little figure fluttered hither and thither, gathering a train, then shaking it off again. Sometimes and her friends, finding the heat intolerable, and wanting space for talk, would overflow into the great central hall, with its cool palms and statues; and there David would listen to torrents of French artistic theory, anecdote, and *blague*, till his head whirled, and French cleverness—conveyed to him in what, to the foreigner, is the most exquisite and the most tantalising of all tongues—seemed to him superhuman.

As to what he saw, after 'Salome,' he remembered vividly only three pictures—Elise Delaunay's two—a portrait and a workshop interior—before which he stood, lost in naïve wonder at her talent; and the head of a woman, with a thin pale face, reddish-brown hair, and a look of pantherish grace and force, which he was told was the portrait of an actress at the Odéon who was making the world stare—Mademoiselle Bernhardt. For the rest he had the vague, distracting impression of a new world—of nude horrors and barbarities of all sorts—of things licentious or cruel, which yet, apparently, were all of as much value in the artist's eye, and to be discussed with as much calm or eagerness, as their neighbours. One moment he loathed what he saw, and threw himself upon his companion, with the half-coherent protests of an English idealism, of which she scarcely understood a word;

the next he lost himself in some landscape which had torn the very heart out of an exquisite mood of nature, or in some scene of peasant life—so true and living that the scents of the fields and the cries of the animals were once more about him, and he lived his childhood over again.

Perhaps the main idea which the experience left with him was one of a goading and intoxicating *freedom*. His country lay in the background of his mind as the symbol of all dull convention and respectability. He was in the land of intelligence, where nothing is prejudged, and all experiments are open.

When they came out, it was to get an ice in the shade, and then to wander to and fro, watching the passers-by—the young men playing a strange game with disks under the trees—the nurses and children—the ladies in the carriages—and talking, with a quick, perpetual advance towards intimacy, towards emotion. More and more there grew upon her the charm of a certain rich poetic intelligence there was in him, stirring beneath his rawness and ignorance, struggling through the fetters of language ; and in response, as the evening wore on, she threw off her professional airs, and sank the egotist out of sight. She became simpler, more childish ; her variable, fanciful youth answered to the magnetism of his.

At last he said to her, as they stood by the Arc de l'Etoile, looking down towards Paris :

'The sun is just going down—this day has been the happiest of my life !'

The low intensity of the tone startled her. Then she had a movement of caprice, of superstition.

'*Alors—assez !* Monsieur David, stay where you are. Not another step !—*Adieu !*'

Astonished and dismayed, he turned involuntarily. But, in the crowd of people passing through the Arch, she had slipped from him, and he had lost her beyond recovery. Moreover, her tone was peremptory—he dared not pursue and anger her.

Minutes passed while he stood, spell- and trance-bound, in the shadow of the Arch. Then, with the long and labouring breath, the sudden fatigue of one who has leapt in a day from one plane of life to another—in whom a passionate and continuous heat of feeling has for the time burnt up the nervous power—he moved on eastwards, down the Champs-Elysées. The sunset was behind him, and the trees threw long shadows across his path. Shade and sun spaces alike seemed to him full of happy crowds. The beautiful city laughed and murmured round him. Nature and man alike bore witness with his own rash heart that all is divinely well with the world—let the cynics and the mourners say what they will. His hour had come, and without a hesitation or a dread he rushed upon it. Passion and youth—ignorance and desire—have never met in madder or more reckless dreams than those which filled the mind of David Grieve as he wandered blindly home.

CHAPTER V

As David climbed the garret stairs to his room, the thought of Louie flashed across his mind for the first time since the morning. He opened the door and looked round. Yes; all her things were gone. She had taken up her abode with the Cervins.

A certain anxiety and discomfort seized him; before going out to the Boulevard to snatch some food in preparation for his evening at the 'Trois Rats' he descended to the landing below and rang the Cervins' bell.

A charwoman, dirty and tired with much cleaning, opened to him.

No, Madame was not at home. No one was at home, and the dinner was spoiling. Had they not been seen all day? Certainly. They had come in about six o'clock *avec une jeune personne* and M. Montjoie. She thought it probable that they were all at that moment down below, in the studio of M. Montjoie.

David already knew his way thither, and was soon standing outside the high black door with the pane of glass above it to which Madame Merichat had originally directed him. While he waited for an answer to his ring he looked about him. He was in a sort of yard which was almost entirely filled up by the sculptor's studio, a long structure lighted at one end as it seemed from the roof, and at the other by the usual north window. At the end of the yard rose a huge many-storied building which seemed to be a factory of some sort. David's Lancashire eye distinguished machinery through the monotonous windows, and the figures of the operatives; it took note also of the fact that the rooms were lit up and work still going on at seven o'clock. All around were the ugly backs of tall houses, every window flung open to this May heat. The scene was squalid and *triste* save for the greenish blue of the evening sky, and the flight of a few pigeons round the roof of the factory.

A man in a blouse came at last, and led the way in when David asked for Madame Cervin. They passed through the inner studio full of a confusion of clay models and casts to which the dust of months gave the look and relief of bronze.

Then the further door opened, and he saw beyond a larger and emptier room; sculptor's work of different kinds, and in various stages on either side; casts, and charcoal studies on the walls, and some dozen people scattered in groups over the floor, all looking towards an object on which the fading light from the upper part of the large window at the end was concentrated.

What was that figure on its pedestal, that white image which lived and breathed? *Louie?*

The brother stood amazed beside the door, staring while the man in the blouse retreated, and the persons in the room were too much occupied with the spectacle before them to notice the new-comer's arrival.

Louie stood upon a low pedestal, which apparently revolved with the model, for as David entered, Montjoie, the man in the grey suit, with the square, massive head, who had joined the party in the Louvre, ran forward and moved it round slightly. She was in Greek dress, and some yards away from her was the clay study—a mænad with vine wreath, tambourine, thyrsus, and floating hair—for which she was posing.

Even David was dazzled by the image thus thrown out before him. With her own dress Louie Grieve seemed to have laid aside for the moment whatever common or provincial elements there might be in her strange and startling beauty. Clothed in the clinging folds of the Greek chiton ; neck, arms, and feet bare ; the rounded forms of the limbs showing under the soft stuff ; the face almost in profile, leaning to the shoulder, as though the delicate ear were listening for the steps of the wine god ; a wreath of vine leaves round the black hair which fell in curly masses about her, sharpening and framing the rosy whiteness of the cheek and neck ; one hand lightly turned back behind her, showing the palm, the other holding a torch ; one foot poised on tiptoe, and the whole body lightly bent forward, as though for instant motion :—in this dress and this attitude, worn and sustained with extraordinary intelligence and audacity, the wild hybrid creature had risen, as it were, for the first time, to the full capacity of her endowment—had eclipsed and yet revealed herself.

The brother stood speechless, looking from the half-completed study to his sister. How had they made her understand ?—where had she got the dress ? And such a dress ! To the young fellow, who in his peasant and tradesman experience had never even seen a woman in the ordinary low dress of society, it seemed incredible, outrageous. And to put it on for the purpose of posing as a model in a room full of strange men—Madame Cervin was the only woman present—his cheek burnt for his sister ; and for the moment indignation and bewilderment held him paralysed.

In front of him a little way, but totally unaware of the stranger's entrance, were two men whispering and laughing together. One held a piece of paper on a book, and was making a hurried sketch of Louie. Every now and then he drew the attention of his companion to some of the points of the model. David caught a careless phrase or two, and understood just enough of their student's slang to suspect a good deal worse than was actually said.

Meanwhile Montjoie was standing against an iron pillar, studying intently every detail of Louie's pose, both hands arched over his eyes.

'*Peste !* did one ever see so many points combined ?' he threw back to a couple of men behind him. 'Too thin—the arms might be better—and the hands a *little* common. But for the *ensemble—mon Dieu!* we should make Carpeaux's *atelier* look alive—*hein ?*'

'Take care!' laughed a man who was leaning against a cast a few feet away, and smoking vigorously. 'She likes it, she has never done it before, but she likes it. Suppose Carpeaux gets hold of her. You may repent showing her, if you want to keep her to yourself.'

'Ah, that right knee wants throwing forward a trifle,' said Montjoie in a preoccupied tone, and going up to Louie, he spoke a few words of bad English.

'Allow me, mademoiselle—put your hand on me—*ainsi*—vile I change dis pretty foot.'

Louie looked down bewildered, then at the other men about her, with her great eyes, half exultant, half inquiring. She understood hardly anything of their French. One of them laughed, and, running to the clay Mænad, stooped down and touched the knee and ankle, to show her what was meant. Louie instinctively put her hand on Montjoie's shoulder to steady herself, and he proceeded to move the bare sandalled foot.

One of the men near him made a remark which David caught. He suddenly strode forward.

'Sir! Have the goodness to tell me how you wish my sister to stand, and I will explain to her. She is not your model!'

The sculptor looked up startled. Everybody stared at the intruder, at the dark English boy, standing with a threatening eye, and trembling with anger, beside his sister. Then Madame Cervin, clasping her little fat hands with an exclamation of dismay, rushed up to the group, while Louie leapt down from her pedestal and went to David.

'What are you interfering for?' she said, pushing Madame Cervin aside and looking him full in the eyes, her own blazing, her chest heaving.

'You are disgracing yourself,' he said to her with the same intensity, fast and low, under his breath, so as to be heard only by her. 'How can you expose yourself as a model to these men whom you never saw before? Let them find their own models; they are a pack of brutes!'

But even as he spoke he shrank before the concentrated wrath of her face.

'I will make you pay for it!' she said. 'I will teach you to domineer.'

Then she turned to Madame Cervin.

'Come and take it off, please!' she said imperiously. 'It's no good while he is here.'

As she crossed the room with her free wild step, her white draperies floating, Montjoie, who had been standing pulling at his moustaches, and studying the brother from under his heavy brows, joined her, and, stooping, said two or three smiling words in her ear. She looked up, tossed her head and laughed—a laugh half reckless, half *farouche;* two or three of the other men hurried after them, and presently they made a knot in the further room, Louie calmly waiting for Madame Cervin, and sitting on

the pedestal of a bronze group, her beautiful head and white shoulders thrown out against the metal. Montjoie's artist friends —of the kind which haunt a man whose *mœurs* are gradually bringing his talent to ruin—stood round her, smoking and talking and staring at the English girl between whiles. The arrogance with which she bore their notice excited them, but they could not talk to her, for she did not understand them. Only Montjoie had a few words of English. Occasionally Louie bent forward and looked disdainfully through the door. When would David be done prating?

For he, in fact, was grappling with Madame Cervin, who was showing great adroitness. This was what had happened according to her. Monsieur Montjoie—a man of astonishing talent, an artist altogether superior—was in trouble about his statue—could not find a model to suit him—was in despair. It seemed that he had heard of mademoiselle's beauty from England, in some way, before she arrived. Then in the studio he had shown her the Greek dress.

'——There were some words between them—some compliments, Monsieur, I suppose—and your sister said she would pose for him. I opposed myself. I knew well that mademoiselle was a young person *tout-à-fait comme il faut*, that monsieur her brother might object to her making herself a model for M. Montjoie. *Mais, mon Dieu!*' and the ex-modiste shrugged her round shoulders—'mademoiselle has a will of her own.'

Then she hinted that in an hour's acquaintance mademoiselle had already shown herself extremely difficult to manage—monsieur would probably understand that. As for her, she had done everything possible. She had taken mademoiselle upstairs and dressed her with her own hands—she had been her maid and companion throughout. She could do no more. Mademoiselle would go her own way.

'Who were all these men?' David inquired, still hot and frowning.

Madame Cervin rose on tiptoe and poured a series of voluble biographies into his ear. According to her everybody present was a person of distinction; was at any rate an artist, and a man of talent. But let monsieur decide. If he was dissatisfied, let him take his sister away. She had been distressed, insulted, by his behaviour. Mademoiselle's box had been not yet unpacked. Let him say the word and it should be taken upstairs again.

And she drew away from him, bridling, striking an attitude of outraged dignity beside her husband, who had stood behind her in a slouching abstracted silence during the whole scene—so far as her dwarf stature and vulgar little moon-face permitted.

'We are strangers here, Madame,' cried David. 'I asked you to take care of my sister, and I find her like this, before a crowd of men neither she nor I have ever seen before!'

Madame Cervin swept her hand grandiloquently round.

'Monsieur has his remedy! Let him take his sister.'

He stood silent in a helpless and obvious perplexity. What, saddle himself afresh after these intoxicating hours of liberty and happiness? Fetter and embarrass every moment? Shut himself out from freedom—from *her?*

Besides, already his first instinctive rage was disappearing. In the confusion of this new world he could no longer tell whether he was right or ridiculous. Had he been playing the Philistine, mistaking a mere artistic convention for an outrage? And Louie was so likely to submit to his admonitions!

Madame Cervin watched him with a triumphant eye. When he began to stammer out what was in effect an apology, she improved the opportunity, threw off her suave manners, and let him understand with a certain plain brutality that she had taken Louie's measure. She would do her best to keep the girl in order —it was lucky for him that he had fallen upon anybody so entirely respectable as herself and her husband—but she would use her own judgment; and if monsieur made scenes, she would just turn out her boarder, and leave him to manage as he could.

She had the whip-hand, and she knew it. He tried to appease her, then discovered that he must go, and went with a hanging head.

Louie took no notice of him nor he of her, as he passed through the inner studio, but Montjoie came forward to meet the English lad, bending his great head and shoulders with a half-ironic politeness. Monsieur Grieve he feared had mistaken the homage rendered by himself and his friends to his sister's beauty for an act of disrespect—let him be reassured! Such beauty was its own defence. No doubt monsieur did not understand artistic usage. He, Montjoie, made allowance for the fact, otherwise the young man's behaviour towards himself and his friends would have required explanation.

The two stood together at the door—David proudly crimson, seeking in vain for phrases that would not come—Montjoie cool and malicious, his battered weather-beaten face traversed by little smiles. Louie was looking on with scornful amusement, and the group of artists round her could hardly control their mirth.

He shut the door behind him with the feeling of one who has cut a ridiculous figure and beaten a mean retreat. Then, as he neared the bottom of the stairs, he gave himself a great shake, with the gesture of one violently throwing off a weight. Let those who thought that he ought to control Louie, and could control her, come and see for themselves! He had done what he thought was for the best—his quick inner sense carefully refrained from attaching any blame whatever to Mademoiselle Delaunay—and now Louie must go her own gait, and he would go his. He had said his say—and she should not spoil this hoarded, this long-looked-for pleasure. As he passed into the street, on his way to the Boulevard for some food, his walk and bearing had in them a stern and passionate energy.

He had to hurry back for his appointment with Mademoiselle Delaunay's friends of the morning. As he turned into the Rue Chantal he passed a flower-stall aglow with roses from the south and sweet with narcissus and mignonette. An idea struck him, and he stopped, a happy smile softening away the still lingering tension of the face. For a few sous he bought a bunch of yellow-eyed narcissus and stepped gaily home with them. He had hardly time to put them in water and to notice that Madame Merichat had made Dubois' squalid abode look much more habitable than before, when there was a knock at the door and his two guides stood outside.

They carried him off at once. David found more of a tongue than he had been master of in the morning, and the three talked incessantly as they wound in and out of the streets which cover the face of the hill of Montmartre, ascending gradually towards the place they were in search of. David had heard something of the history of the two from Elise Delaunay. Alphonse was a lad of nineteen brimming over with wild fun and mischief, and perpetually in disgrace with all possible authorities ; the possessor nevertheless of a certain delicate and subtle fancy which came out in the impressionist landscapes—many of them touched with a wild melancholy as inexplicable probably to himself as to other people—which he painted in all his spare moments. The tall black-bearded Lenain was older, had been for years in Taranne's *atelier*, was an excellent draughtsman, and was now just beginning seriously upon the painting of large pictures for exhibition. In his thin long face there was a pinched and anxious look, as though in the artist's inmost mind there lay hidden the presentiment of failure.

They talked freely enough of Elise Delaunay, David alternately wincing and craving for more. What a clever little devil it was ! She was burning herself away with ambition and work ; Taranne flattered her a good deal ; it was absolutely necessary, otherwise she would be for killing herself two or three times a week. Oh ! she might get her *mention* at the Salon. The young Solons sitting in judgment on her thought on the whole she deserved it ; two of her exhibits were not bad ; but there was another girl in the *atelier*, Mademoiselle Bréal, who had more interest in high places. However, Taranne would do what he could ; he had always made a favourite of the little Elise ; and only he could manage her when she was in one of her impracticable fits.

Then Alphonse put the Englishman through a catechism, and at the end of it they both advised him not to trouble his head about George Sand. That was all dead and done with, and Balzac not much less. He might be great, Balzac, but who could be at the trouble of reading him nowadays ? Lenain, who was literary, named to him with enthusiasm Flaubert's 'Madame Bovary' and the brothers Goncourt. As for Alphonse, who was capable, however, of occasional excursions into poetry, and could

quote Musset and Hugo, the *feuilletons* in the 'Gaulois' or the 'Figaro' seemed, on the whole, to provide him with as much fiction as he desired. He was emphatically of opinion that the artist wants no books; a little poetry, perhaps, did no harm; but literature in painting was the very devil. Then perceiving that between them they had puzzled their man, Alphonse would have proceeded to 'cram' him in the most approved style, but that Lenain interposed, and a certain cooling of the Englishman's bright eye made success look unpromising. Finally the wild fellow clapped David on the back and assured him that 'Les Trois Rats' would astonish him. 'Ah! here we are.'

As he spoke they turned a corner, and a blaze of light burst upon them, coming from what seemed to be a gap in the street face, a house whereof the two lower stories were wall- and windowless, though not in the manner of the ordinary café, seeing that the open parts were raised somewhat above the pavement.

'The patron saint!' said Alphonse, stopping with a grin and pointing. Following the finger with his eye David caught a fantastic sign swinging above him: a thin iron crescent, and sitting up between its two tips a lean black rat, its sharp nose in the air, its tail curled round its iron perch, while two other creatures of the same kind crept about him, the one clinging to the lower tip of the crescent, the other peering down from the top on the king-rat in the middle. Below the sign, and heavily framed by the dark overhanging eave, the room within was clearly visible from the street. From the background of its black oak walls and furniture emerged figures, lights, pictures, above all an imposing *cheminée* advancing far into the floor, a high, fantastic structure also of black oak like the panelling of the room, but overrun with chains of black rats, carved and combined with a wild *diablerie*, and lit by numerous lights in branching ironwork. The dim grotesque shapes of the pictures, the gesticulating, shouting crowd in front of them, the mediævalism of the room and of that strange sign dangling outside: these things took the English lad's excited fancy and he pressed his way in behind his companions. He forgot what they had been telling him; his pulse beat to the old romantic tune; poets, artists, talkers—here he was to find them.

David's two companions exchanged greetings on all sides, laughing and shouting like the rest. With difficulty they found a table in a remote corner, and, sitting down, ordered coffee.

'Alphonse! *mon cher!*'

A young man sitting at the next table turned round upon them, slapped Alphonse on the shoulder, and stared hard at David. He had fine black eyes in a bronzed face, a silky black beard, and long hair *à la lion*, that is to say, thrown to one side of the head in a loose mane-like mass.

'I have just come from the Salon. Not bad—Regnault? *Hein?*'

'*Non—il arrivera, celui-là*,' said the other calmly.

'As for the other things from the Villa Medici fellows,' said the first speaker, throwing his arm round the back of his chair, and twisting it round so as to front them, 'they make me sick. I should hardly do my fire the injustice of lighting it with some of them.'

'All the same,' replied Alphonse stoutly, 'that Campagna scene of D.'s is well done.'

'Literature, *mon cher !* literature !' cried the unknown, 'and what the deuce do we want with literature in painting ?'

He brought his fist down violently on the table.

'*Connu*,' said Alphonse scornfully. 'Don't excite yourself. But the story in D.'s picture doesn't matter a halfpenny. Who cares what the figures are doing ? It's the brushwork and the values I look to. How did he get all that relief—that brilliance ? No sunshine—no local colour—and the thing glows like a Rembrandt !'

The boy's mad blue eyes took a curious light, as though some inner enthusiasm had stirred.

'*Peuh !* we all know you, Alphonse. Say what you like, you want something else in a picture than painting. That'll damn you, and make your fortune some day, I warn you. Now *I* have got a picture on the easel that will make the *bourgeois* skip.'

And the speaker passed a large tremulous hand through his waves of hair, his lip also quivering with the nervousness of a man overworked and overdone.

'You'll not send it to the Salon, I imagine,' said another man beside him, dryly. He was fair, small and clean-shaven, wore spectacles, and had the look of a clerk or man of business.

'Yes, I shall.' cried the other violently—his name was Dumesnil—'I'll fling it at their heads. That's all our school can do—make a scandal.'

'Well, that has even been known to make money,' said the other, fingering his watch-chain with a disagreeable little smile.

'Money !' shouted Dumesnil, and swinging round to his own table again he poured out hot denunciations of the money-grabbing reptiles of to-day who shelter themselves behind the sacred name of art. Meanwhile the man at whom it was all levelled sipped his coffee quietly and took no notice.

'Ah, a song !' cried Alphonse. 'Lenain, *vois-tu ?* It's that little devil Perinot. He's been painting churches down near Toulouse, his own country. Saints by the dozen, like this,' and Alphonse drooped his eyes and crossed his limp hands, taking off the frescoed mediæval saint for an instant, as only the Parisian *gamin* can do such things. 'You should see him with a *curé*. However, the *curés* don't follow him here, more's the pity. Ah ! *très bien—très bien !*'

These plaudits were called out by some passages on the guitar with which the singer was prefacing his song. His chair had been mounted on to a table, so that all the world could see

and hear. A hush of delighted attention penetrated the room; and outside, in the street, David could see dark forms gathering on the pavement.

The singer was a young man, undersized and slightly deformed, with close-cut hair, and a large face, droll, pliant and ugly as a gutta-percha mask. Before he opened his lips the audience laughed.

David listened with all his ears, feeling through every fibre the piquant strangeness of the scene—alive with the foreigner's curiosity, and with youth's pleasure in mere novelty. And what clever fellows, what dash, what *camaraderie!* That old imaginative drawing towards France and the French was becoming something eagerly personal, combative almost,—and in the background of his mind throughout was the vibrating memory of the day just past—the passionate sense of a new life.

The song was tumultuously successful. The whole crowded *salle*, while it was going on, was one sea of upturned faces, and it was accompanied at intervals by thunders of applause, given out by means of sticks, spoons, fists, or anything else that might come handy. It recounted the adventures of an artist and his model. As it proceeded, a slow crimson rose into the English lad's cheek, overspread his forehead and neck. He sat staring at the singer, or looking round at the absorbed attention and delight of his companions. By the end of it David, his face propped on his hands, was trying nervously to decipher the names and devices cut in the wood of the table on which he leant. His whole being was in a surge of physical loathing—the revulsion of feeling was bewildering and complete. So this was what Frenchmen thought of women, what they could say of them, when the mask was off, and they were at their ease. The witty brutality, the naked coarseness of the thing scourged the boy's shrinking sense. Freedom, passion—yes! but *this!* In his wild recoil he stood again under the Arc de Triomphe watching her figure disappear. Ah! pardon! That he should be listening at all seemed to a conscience, an imagination quickened by first love, to be an outrage to women, to love, to her!

Yet—how amusing it was! how irresistible, as the first shock subsided, was the impression of sparkling verse, of an astonishing mimetic gift in the singer! Towards the end he had just made up his mind to go on the first pretext, when he found himself, to his own disgust, shaking with laughter.

He recovered himself after a while, resolved to stay it out, and betrayed nothing. The comments made by his two companions on the song—consisting mainly of illustrative anecdote—were worthy of the occasion. David sat, however, without flinching, his black eyes hardening, laughing at intervals.

Presently the room rose *en bloc*, and there was a move towards the staircase.

'The manager, M. Edmond, has come,' explained Alphonse; 'they are going upstairs to the concert-room. They will have a

recitation perhaps,—*ombres chinoises*,—music. Come and look at the drawings before we go.'

And he took his charge round the walls, which were papered with drawings and sketches, laughing and explaining. The drawings were done, in the main, according to him, by the artists on the staffs of two illustrated papers which had their headquarters at the 'Trois Rats.' David was especially seized by the innumerable sheets of animal sketches—series in which some episode of animal life was carried through from its beginning to a close, sometimes humorous, but more often tragic. In a certain number of them there was a free imagination, an irony, a pity, which linked them together, marked them as the conceptions of one brain. Alphonse pointed to them as the work of a clever fellow, lately dead, who had been launched and supported by the 'Trois Rats' and its frequenters. One series in particular, representing a robin overcome by the seduction of a glass of absinthe and passing through all the stages of delirium tremens, had a grim inventiveness, a fecundity of half humorous, half pathetic fancy, which held David's eye riveted.

As for the ballet-girl, she was everywhere, with her sisters, the model and the *grisette*. And the artistic ability shown in the treatment of her had nowhere been hampered by any Philistine scruple in behalf of decency.

Upstairs there was the same mixed experience. David found himself in a corner with his two acquaintances, and four or five others, a couple of journalists, a musician and a sculptor. The conversation ranged from art to religion, from religion to style, from style to women, and all with a perpetual recurrence either to the pictures and successes of the Salon, or to the *liaisons* of well-known artists.

'Why do none of us fellows in the press pluck up courage and tell H. what we really think about those Homeric *machines* of his which he turns out year after year?' said a journalist, who was smoking beside him, an older man than the rest of them. 'I have a hundred things I want to say—but H. is popular—I like him himself—and I haven't the nerve. But what the devil do we want with the Greeks—they painted their world—let us paint ours! Besides, it is an absurdity. I thought as I was looking at H.'s things this morning of what Préault used to say of Pradier: "*Il partait tous les matins pour la Grèce et arrivait tous les soirs Rue de Bréda.*" Pose your goddesses as you please—they are *grisettes* all the same.'

'All very well for you critics,' growled a man smoking a long pipe beside him; 'but the artist must live, and the *bourgeois* will have subjects. He won't have anything to do with your "notes"—and "impressions"—and "arrangements." When you present him with the view, served hot, from your four-pair back—he buttons up his pockets and abuses you. He wants his stories and his sentiment. And where the deuce is the sentiment to be got? I should be greatly obliged to anyone

who would point me to a little of the commodity. The Greeks are already ridiculous,—and as for religion—'

The speaker threw back his head and laughed silently.

'Ah! I agree with you,' said the other emphatically; 'the religious pictures this year are really too bad. Christianity is going too fast—for the artist.'

'And the sceptics are becoming bores,' cried the painter; 'they take themselves too seriously. It is, after all, only another dogmatism. One should believe in nothing—not even in one's doubts.'

'Yes,' replied the journalist, knocking out his pipe, with a sardonic little smile—'strange fact! One may swim in free thought and remain as *banal* as a bishop all the time.'

'I say,' shouted a fair-haired youth opposite, 'who has seen C.'s Holy Family? Who knows where he got his Madonna?'

Nobody knew, and the speaker had the felicity of imparting an entirely fresh scandal to attentive ears. The mixture in the story of certain brutalities of modern manners with names and things still touching or sacred for the mass of mankind had the old Voltairean flavour. But somehow, presented in this form and at this moment, David no longer found it attractive. He sat nursing his knee, his dark brows drawn together, studying the story-teller, whose florid Norman complexion and blue eyes were already seared by a vicious experience.

The tale, however, was interrupted and silenced by the first notes of a piano. The room was now full, and a young actor from the Gymnase company was about to give a musical sketch. The subject of it was 'St. Francis and Santa Clara.'

This performance was perhaps more wittily broad than anything which had gone before. The audience was excessively amused by it. It was indeed the triumph of the evening, and nothing could exceed the grace and point of the little speech in which M. Edmond, the manager of the café, thanked the accomplished singer afterwards.

While it was going on, David, always with that poignant, shrinking thought of Elise at his heart, looked round to see if there were any women present. Yes, there were three. Two were young, outrageously dressed, with sickly pretty tired faces. The third was a woman in middle life, with short hair parted at the side, and a strong, masculine air. Her dress was as nearly as possible that of a man, and she was smoking vigorously. The rough *bonhomie* of her expression and her professional air reminded David once more of George Sand. An artist, he supposed, or a writer.

Suddenly, towards the end of the sketch, he became conscious of a tall figure behind the singer, a man standing with his hat in his hand, as though he had just come in, and were just going away. His fine head was thrown back, his look was calm, David thought disdainful. Bending forward he recognised M. Regnault, the hero of the morning.

Regnault had come in unperceived while the dramatic piece was going on ; but it was no sooner over than he was discovered, and the whole *salle* rose to do him honour. The generosity, the extravagance of the ovation offered to the young painter by this hundred or two of artists and men of letters were very striking to the foreign eye. David found himself thrilling and applauding with the rest. The room had passed in an instant from cynicism to sentiment. A moment ago it had been trampling to mud the tenderest feeling of the past ; it was now eagerly alive with the feeling of the present.

The new-comer protested that he had only dropped in, being in the neighbourhood, and must not stay. He was charming to them all, asked after this man's picture and that man's statue, talked a little about the studio he was organising at Tangiers, and then, shaking hands right and left, made his way through the crowd.

As he passed David, his quick eye caught the stranger and he paused.

'Were you not in the Louvre this morning with Mademoiselle Delaunay?' he asked, lowering his voice a little ; 'you are a stranger?'

'Yes, an Englishman,' David stammered, taken by surprise. Regnault's look swept over the youth's face, kindling in an instant with the artist's delight in beautiful line and tint.

'Are you going now?'

'Yes,' said David hurriedly. 'It must be late?'

'Midnight, past. May I walk with you?'

David, overwhelmed, made some hurried excuses to his two companions, and found himself pushing his way to the door, an unnoticed figure in the tumult of Regnault's exit.

When they got into the street outside, Regnault walked fast southwards for a minute or so without speaking. Then he stopped abruptly, with the gesture of one shaking off a weight.

'Pah ! this Paris chokes me.'

Then, walking on again, he said, half-coherently, and to himself :

'So vile,—so small,—so foul ! And there are such great things in the world. *Beasts!—pigs!*—and yet so generous, so struggling, such a hard fight for it. So gifted,—many of them ! What are you here for?'

And he turned round suddenly upon his companion. David, touched and captured he knew not how by the largeness and spell of the man's presence, conquered his shyness and explained himself as intelligibly as he could :

An English bookseller, making his way in trade, yet drawn to France by love for her literature and her past, and by a blood-tie which seemed to have in it mystery and pain, for it could hardly be spoken of—the curious little story took the artist's fancy. Regnault did his best to draw out more of it, helped the young fellow with his French, tried to get at his impressions, and

clearly enjoyed the experience to which his seeking artist's sense had led him.

'What a night!' he said at last, drawing a full draught of the May into his great chest. 'Stop and look down those streets in the moonlight. What surfaces,—what gradations,—what a beauty of multiplied lines, though it is only a piece of vulgar Haussmann! Indoors I can't breathe—but out of doors and at night this Paris of ours,—ah! she is still beautiful—*beautiful!* Now one has shaken the dust of that place off, one can feel it. What did you think of it?—tell me.'

He stooped and looked into his companion's face. David was tall and lithe, but Regnault was at least half a head taller and broader in proportion.

David walked along for a minute without answering. He too, and even more keenly than Regnault, was conscious of escape and relief. A force which had, as it were, taken life and feeling by the throat had relaxed its grip. He disengaged himself with mingled loathing and joy. But in his shyness he did not know how to express himself, fearing, too, to wound the Frenchman. At last he said slowly:

'I never saw so many clever people together in my life.'

The words were bald, but Regnault perfectly understood what was meant by them, as well as by the troubled consciousness of the black eyes raised to his. He laughed—shortly and bitterly.

'No, we don't lack brains, we French. All the same I tell you, in the whole of that room there are about half-a-dozen people,—oh, not so many!—not nearly so many!—who will ever make a mark, even for their own generation, who will ever strike anything out of nature that is worth having—wrestle with her to any purpose. Why? Because they have every sort of capacity—every sort of cleverness—and *no character!*'

David walked beside him in silence. He thought suddenly of Regnault's own picture—its strange cruelty and force, its craftsman's brilliance. And the recollection puzzled him.

Regnault, however, had spoken with passion, and as though out of the fulness of some sore and long-familiar pondering.

'You never saw anything like that in England,' he resumed quickly.

David hesitated.

'No, I never did. But I am a provincial, and I have seen nothing at all. Perhaps in London—'

'No, you would see nothing like it in London,' said Regnault decidedly. 'Bah! it is not that you are more virtuous than we are. Who believes such folly? But your vice is grosser, stupider. Lucky for you! You don't sacrifice to it the best young brain of the nation, as we are perpetually doing. Ah, *mon Dieu!*' he broke out in a kind of despair, 'this enigma of art!—of the artist! One flounders and blunders along. I have been floundering and blundering with the rest,—playing tricks—

following this man and that—till suddenly—a door opens—and one sees the real world through for the first time!'

He stood still in his excitement, a smile of the most exquisite quality and sweetness dawning on his strong young face.

'And then,' he went on, beginning to walk again, and talking much more to the night than to his companion, 'one learns that the secret of life lies in *feeling*—in the heart, not in the head. And no more limits than before!—all is still open, divinely open. Range the whole world—see everything, learn everything—till at the end of years and years you may perhaps be found worthy to be called an artist! But let art have her ends, all the while, shining beyond the means she is toiling through—her ends of beauty or of power. To spend herself on the mere photography of the vile and the hideous! what waste—what sacrilege!'

They had reached the Place de la Concorde, which lay bathed in moonlight, the silver fountains plashing, the trees in the Champs-Elysées throwing their sharp yet delicate shadows on the intense whiteness of the ground, the buildings far away rising softly into the softest purest blue. Regnault stopped and looked round him with enchantment. As for David, he had no eyes save for his companion. His face was full of a quick responsive emotion. After an experience which had besmirched every ideal and bemocked every faith, the young Frenchman's talk had carried the lad once more into the full tide of poetry and romance. 'The secret of life lies in *feeling*, in the heart, not the head'—ah, *that* he understood! He tried to express his assent, his homage to the speaker; but neither he nor the artist understood very clearly what he was saying. Presently Regnault said in another tone:

'And they are such good fellows, many of them. Starving often—but nothing to propitiate the *bourgeois*, nothing to compromise the "dignity of art." A man will paint to please himself all day, paint, on a crust, something that won't and can't sell, that the world in fact would be mad to buy; then in the evening he will put his canvas to the wall, and paint sleeve-links or china to live. And so generous to each other: they will give each other all they have—food, clothes, money, knowledge. That man who gave that abominable thing about St. Francis—I know him, he has a little apartment near the Quai St.-Michel, and an invalid mother. He is a perfect angel to her. I could take off my hat to him whenever I think of it.'

His voice dropped again. Regnault was pacing along across the Place, his arms behind him, David at his side. When he resumed, it was once more in a tone of despondency.

'There is an ideal; but so twisted, so corrupted! What is wanted is not less intelligence but *more*—more knowledge, more experience—something beyond this fevering, brutalising Paris, which is all these men know. They have got the poison of the Boulevards in their blood, and it dulls their eye and hand. They want scattering to the wilderness; they want the wave of life to

come and lift them past the mud they are dabbling in, with its hideous wrecks and *débris*, out and away to the great sea, to the infinite beyond of experience and feeling! you, too, feel with me?—you, too, see it like that? Ah! when one has seen and felt Italy—the East,—the South—lived heart to heart with a wild nature, or with the great embodied thought of the past,—lived at large, among great things, great sights, great emotions, then there comes purification! There is no other way out—no, none!'

So for another hour Regnault led the English boy up and down and along the quays, talking in the frankest openest way to this acquaintance of a night. It was as though he were wrestling his own way through his own life-problem. Very often David could hardly follow. The joys, the passions, the temptations of the artist, struggling with the life of thought and aspiration, the craving to know everything, to feel everything, at war with the hunger for a moral unity and a stainless self-respect—there was all this in his troubled, discursive talk, and there was besides the magic touch of genius, youth, and poetry.

'Well, this is strange!' he said at last, stopping at a point between the Louvre on the one hand and the Institute on the other, the moonlit river lying between.—'My friends come to me at Rome or at Tangiers, and they complain of me, "Regnault, you have grown morose, no one can get a word out of you"—and they go away wounded—I have seen it often. And it was always true. For months I have had no words. I have been in the dark, wrestling with my art and with this goading, torturing world, which the artist with his puny forces has somehow to tame and render. Then—the other day—ah! well, no matter!—but the dark broke, and there was light! and when I saw your face, your stranger's face, in that crowd to-night, listening to those things, it drew me. I wanted to say my say. I don't make excuses. Very likely we shall never meet again—but for this hour we have been friends. Good night!—good night! Look,—the dawn is coming!'

And he pointed to where, behind the towers of Notre-Dame, the first whiteness of the coming day was rising into the starry blue.

They shook hands.

'You go back to England soon?'

'In a—a—week or two.'

'Only believe this—we have things better worth seeing than "Les Trois Rats"—things that represent us better. That is what the foreigner is always doing; he spends his time in wondering at our monkey tricks; there is no nation can do them so well as we; and the great France—the undying France!—disappears in a splutter of *blague!*'

He leant over the parapet, forgetting his companion, his eyes fixed on the great cathedral, on the slender shaft of the Sainte Chapelle, on the sky filling with light.

Then suddenly he turned round, laid a quick hand on his companion's shoulder.

'If you ever feel inclined to write to me, the École des Beaux-Arts will find me. Adieu.'

And drawing his coat round him in the chilliness of the dawn, he walked off quickly across the bridge.

David also hurried away, speeding along the deserted pavements till again he was in his own dark street. The dawn was growing from its first moment of mysterious beauty into a grey disillusioning light. But he felt no reaction. He crept up the squalid stairs to his room. It was heavy with the scent of the narcissus.

He took them, and stole along the passage to Elise's door. There were three steps outside it. He sat down on the lowest, putting his flowers beside him. There was something awful to him even in this nearness; he dare not have gone higher.

He sat there for long—his heart beating, beating. Every part of his French experience so far, whether by sympathy or recoil, had helped to bring him to this intoxication of sense and soul. Regnault had spoken of the 'great things' of life. Had he too come to understand them—thus?

At last he left his flowers there, kissing the step on which they were laid, and which her foot must touch. He could hardly sleep; the slight fragrance which clung to the old bearskin in which he wrapt himself helped to keep him restless; it was the faint heliotrope scent he had noticed in her room.

CHAPTER VI

'He loves me—he does really! Poor boy!'

The speaker was Elise Delaunay. She was sitting alone on the divan in her *atelier*, trying on a pair of old Pompadour shoes, with large faded rosettes and pink heels, which she had that moment routed out of a broker's shop in the Rue de Seine, on her way back from the Luxembourg with David. They made her feet look enchantingly small, and she was holding back her skirts that she might get a good look at them.

Her conviction of David's passion did not for some time lessen her interest in the shoes, but at last she kicked them off, and flung herself back on the divan, to think out the situation a little.

Yes, the English youth's adoration could no longer be ignored. It had become evident, even to her own acquaintances and comrades in the various galleries she was now haunting in this bye-time of the artistic year. Whenever she and he appeared together now, there were sly looks and smiles.

The scandal of it did not affect her in the least. She belonged to Bohemia, so apparently did he. She had been perfectly honest till now; but she had never let any convention stand in her way. All her conceptions of the relations between men and women were of an extremely free kind. Her mother's blood in her accounted both for a certain coldness and a certain personal refinement which

both divided and protected her from a great many of her acquaintance, but through her father she had been acquainted for years with the type of life and *ménage* which prevails among a certain section of the French artist class, and if the occasion were but strong enough she had no instincts inherited or acquired which would stand in the way of the gratification of passion.

On the contrary, her reasoned opinions so far as she had any were all in favour of *l'union libre*—that curious type of association which held the artist Théodore Rousseau for life to the woman who passed as his wife, and which obtains to a remarkable extent, with all those accompaniments of permanence, fidelity, and mutual service, which are commonly held to belong only to *l'union légale*, in one or two strata of French society. She was capable of sentiment; she had hidden veins of womanish weakness; but at the same time the little creature's prevailing temper was one of remarkable coolness and audacity. She judged for herself; she had read for herself, observed for herself. Such a temper had hitherto preserved her from adventures; but, upon occasion, it might as easily land her in one. She was at once a daughter of art and a daughter of the people, with a cross strain of gentle breeding and intellectual versatility thrown in, which made her more interesting and more individual than the rest of her class.

'We are a pair of Romantics out of date, you and I,' she had said once to David, half mocking, half in earnest, and the phrase fitted the relation and position of the pair very nearly. In spite of the enormous difference of their habits and training they had at bottom similar tastes—the same capacity for the excitements of art and imagination, the same shrinking from the coarse and ugly sides of the life amid which they moved, the same cravings for novelty and experience.

David went no more to the 'Trois Rats,' and when, in obedience to Lenain's recommendation, he had bought and begun to read a novel of the Goncourts, he threw it from him in a disgust beyond expression. *Her* talk, meanwhile, was in some respects of the freest; she would discuss subjects impossible to the English girl of the same class; she asked very few questions as to the people she mixed with; and he was, by now, perfectly acquainted with her view, that on the whole marriage was for the *bourgeois*, and had few attractions for people who were capable of penetrating deeper into the rich growths of life. But there was no *personal* taint or license in what she said; and she herself could be always happily divided from her topics. Their Bohemia was canopied with illusions, but the illusions on the whole were those of poetry.

Were all David's illusions hers, however? *Love!* She thought of it, half laughing, as she lay on the divan. She knew nothing about it—she was for *art*. Yet what a brow, what eyes, what a gait—like a young Achilles!

She sprang up to look at a sketch of him, dashed off the day

before, which was on the easel. Yes, it was like. There was the quick ardent air, the southern colour, the clustering black hair, the young parting of the lips. The invitation of the eyes was irresistible—she smiled into them—the little pale face flushing.

But at the same moment her attention was caught by a sketch pinned against the wall just behind the easel.

'Ah! my cousin, my good cousin!' she said, with a little mocking twist of the mouth; 'how strange that you have not been here all this time—never once! There was something said, I remember, about a visit to Bordeaux about now. Ah! well—*tant mieux*—for you would be rather jealous, my cousin!'

Then she sat down with her hands on her knees, very serious. How long since they met? A week. How long till the temporary closing of the Salon and the voting of the rewards? A fortnight. Well, should it go on till then? Yes or no? As soon as she knew her fate—or at any rate if she got her *mention*—she would go back to work. She had two subjects in her mind; she would work at home, and Taranne had promised to come and advise her. Then she would have no time for handsome English boys. But till then?

She took an anemone from a bunch David had brought her, and began to pluck off the petals, alternating 'yes' and 'no.' The last petal fell to 'yes.'

'I should have done just the same if it had been "no,"' she said, laughing. '*Allons*, he amuses me, and I do him no harm. When I go back to work he can do his business. He has done none yet. He will forget me and make some money.'

She paced up and down the studio thinking again. She was conscious of some remorse for her part in sending the Englishman's sister to the Cervins. The matter had never been mentioned again between her and David; yet she knew instinctively that he was often ill at ease. The girl was perpetually in Montjoie's studio, and surrounded in public places by a crew of his friends. Madame Cervin was constantly in attendance no doubt, but if it came to a struggle she would have no power with the English girl, whose obstinacy was in proportion to her ignorance.

Elise had herself once stopped Madame Cervin on the stairs, and said some frank things of the sculptor, in order to quiet an uncomfortable conscience.

'Ah! you do not like Monsieur Montjoie?' said the other, looking hard at her.

Elise coloured, then she recovered herself.

'All the world knows that Monsieur Montjoie has no scruples, madame,' she cried angrily. 'You know it yourself. It is a shame. That girl understands nothing.'

Madame Cervin laughed.

'Certainly she understands everything that she pleases, mademoiselle. But if there is any anxiety, let her brother come and look after her. He can take her where she wants to go.

should be glad indeed. I am as tired as a dog. Since she came it is one *tapage* from morning till night.'

And Elise retired, discomfited before those small malicious eyes. Since David's adoration for the girl artist in No. 27 had become more or less public property, Madame Cervin, who had seen from the beginning that Louie was a burden on her brother, had decidedly the best of the situation.

'Has she lent Montjoie money?'

Elise meditated. The little *bourgeoise* had a curious weakness for posing as the patron of the various artists in the house. 'Very possible! and she looks on the Mænad as the only way of getting it back? She would sell her soul for a napoleon—I always knew that. *Canaille*, all of them!'

And the meditation ended in the impatient conclusion that neither she nor the brother had any responsibility. After all, any decent girl, French or English, could soon see for herself what manner of man was Jules Montjoie! And now for the 'private view' of a certain artistic club to which she had promised to take her English acquaintance. All the members of the club were young—of the new rebellious school of '*plein air*'—the afternoon promised to be amusing.

So the companionship of these two went on, and David passed from one golden day to another. How she lectured him, the little, vain, imperious thing; and how meek he was with her, how different from his Manchester self! The woman's cleverness filled the field. The man, wholly preoccupied with other things, did not care to produce himself, and in the first ardour of his new devotion kept all the self-assertive elements of his own nature in the background, caring for nothing but to watch her eyes as she talked, to have her voice in his ears, to keep her happy and content in his company.

Yet she was not taken in. With other people he must be proud, argumentative, self-willed—that she was sure of; but her conviction only made her realise her power over him with the more pleasure. His naïve respect for her own fragmentary knowledge, his unbounded admiration for her talent, his quick sympathy for all she did and was, these things, little by little, tended to excite, to preoccupy her.

Especially was she bent upon his artistic education. She carried him hither and thither, to the Louvre, the Luxembourg, the Salon, insisting with a feverish eloquence and invention that he should worship all that she worshipped—no matter if he did not understand!—let him worship all the same—till he had learnt his new alphabet with a smiling docility, and caught her very tricks of phrase. Especially were they haunters of the sculptures in the Louvre, where, because of the difficulty of it, she piqued herself most especially on knowledge, and could convict him most triumphantly of a barbarian ignorance. Up and down they wandered, and she gave him eyes, whether for Artemis, or Aphrodite, or Apollo, or still more for the significant and

troubling art of the Renaissance, French and Italian. She would flit before him, perching here and there like a bird, and quivering through and through with a voluble enjoyment.

Then from these lingerings amid a world charged at every point with the elements of passion and feeling, they would turn into the open air, into the May sunshine, which seemed to David's northern eyes so lavish and inexhaustible, carrying with it inevitably the kindness of the gods! They would sit out of doors either in the greenwood paths of the Bois, where he could lie at her feet, and see nothing but her face and the thick young wood all round them, or in some corner of the Champs-Elysées, or the sun-beaten Quai de la Conférence, where the hurrying life of the town brushed past them incessantly, yet without disturbing for a moment their absorption in or entertainment of each other.

Yet all through she maintained her mastery of the situation. She was a riddle to him often, poor boy! One moment she would lend herself in bewildering unexpected ways to his passion, the next she would allow him hardly the privileges of the barest acquaintance, hardly the carrying of her cloak, the touch of her hand. But she had no qualms. It was but to last another fortnight; the friendship soothed and beguiled for her these days of excited waiting; and a woman, when she is an artist and a Romantic, may at least sit, smoke, and chat with whomsoever she likes, provided it be a time of holiday, and she is not betraying her art.

Meanwhile the real vulgarity of her nature—its insatiable vanity, its reckless ambition—was masked from David mainly by the very jealousy and terror which her artist's life soon produced in him. He saw no sign of other lovers; she had many acquaintances but no intimates; and the sketch in her room had been carelessly explained to him as the portrait of her cousin. But the *atelier*, and the rivalries it represented:—after three days with her he had learnt that what had seemed to him the extravagance, the pose of her first talk with him, was in truth the earnest, the reality of her existence. She told him that since she was a tiny child she had dreamed of *fame*—dreamed of people turning in the streets when she passed—of a glory that should lift her above all the commonplaces of existence, and all the disadvantages of her own start in life.

'I am neither beautiful, nor rich, nor well-born; but if I have talent, what matter? Everyone will be at my feet. And if I have no talent—*grand Dieu!*—what is there left for me but to kill myself?'

And she would clasp her hands round her knees, and look at him with fierce, drawn brows, as though defying him to say a single syllable in favour of any meaner compromise with fate.

This fever of the artist and the *concurrent*—in a woman above all—how it bewildered him! He soon understood enough of it, however, to be desperately jealous of it, to realise something of the preliminary bar it placed between any lover and the girl's heart and life.

Above all was he jealous of her teachers. Taranne clearly could beat her down with a word, reduce her to tears with an unfavourable criticism; then he had but to hold up a finger, to say, 'Mademoiselle, you have worked well this week, your drawing shows improvement, I have hopes of you,' to bring her to his feet with delight and gratitude. It was a *monstrous* power, this power of the master with his pupil! How could women submit to it?

Yet his lover's instincts led him safely through many perils. He was infinitely complaisant towards all her artistic talk, all her gossip of the *atelier*. It seemed to him—but then his apprehension of this strange new world was naturally a somewhat confused one—that Elise was not normally on terms with any of her fellow students.

'If I don't get my *mention*,' she would say passionately, 'I tell you again it will be intrigue: it will be those *creatures* in the *atelier* who want to get rid of me—to finish with me. Ah! I will *crush* them all yet. And I have been good to them all—every one—I vow I have—even to that animal of a Bréal, who is always robbing me of my place at the *concours*, and taking mean advantages. *Misérables!*'

And the tears would stand in her angry eyes; her whole delicate frame would throb with fierce feeling.

Gradually he learnt how to deal with these fits, even when they chilled him with a dread, a conviction he dared not analyse. He would so soothe and listen to her, so ply her with the praises of her gift, which came floated to him on the talk of those acquaintances of hers to whom she had introduced him, that her most deep-rooted irritations would give way for a time. The woman would reappear; she would yield to the charm of his admiring eyes, his stammered flatteries; her whole mood would break up, dissolve into eager softness, and she would fall into a childish plaintiveness, saying wild generous things even of her rivals, now there seemed to be no one under heaven to take their part, and at last, even, letting her little hand fall into those eager brown ones which lay in wait for it, letting it linger there—forgotten.

Especially was she touched in his favour by the way in which Regnault had singled him out. After he had given her the history of that midnight walk, he saw clearly that he had risen to a higher plane in her esteem. She had no heroes exactly; but she had certain artistic passions, certain romantic fancies, which seemed to touch deep fibres in her. Her admiration for Regnault was one of these; but David soon understood that he had no cause whatever to be jealous of it. It was a matter purely of the mind and the imagination.

So the days passed—the hot lengthening days. Sometimes in the long afternoons they pushed far afield into the neighbourhood of Paris. The green wooded hills of Sèvres and St. Cloud, the blue curves and reaches of the Seine, the flashing lights and

figures, the pleasures of companionship, self-revelation, independence—the day was soon lost in these quick impressions, and at night they would come back in a fragrant moonlight, descending from their train into the noise and glitter of the streets, only to draw closer together—for surely on these crowded pavements David might claim her little arm in his for safety's sake—till at last they stood in the dark passage between his door and hers, and she would suddenly pelt him with a flower, spring up her small stairway, and lock her door behind her, before, in his emotion, he could find his voice or a farewell. Then he would make his way into his own den, and sit there in the dark, lost in a thronging host of thoughts and memories,—feeling life one vibrating delight.

At last one morning he awoke to the fact that only four days more remained before the date on which, according to their original plan, they were to go back to Manchester. He laughed aloud when the recollection first crossed his mind; then, having a moment to himself, he sat down and scrawled a few hasty words to John. Business detained him yet a while—would detain him a few weeks—let John manage as he pleased, his employer trusted everything to him—and money was enclosed. Then he wrote another hurried note to the bank where he had placed his six hundred pounds. Let them send him twenty pounds at once, in Bank of England notes. He felt himself a young king as he gave the order—king of this mean world and of its dross. All his business projects had vanished from his mind. He could barely have recalled them if he had tried. During the first days of his acquaintance with Elise he had spent a few spare hours in turning over the boxes on the quays, in talks with booksellers in the Rue de Seine or the Rue de Lille, in preliminary inquiries respecting some commissions he had undertaken. But now, every hour, every thought were hers. What did money matter, in the name of Heaven? Yet when his twenty pounds came, he changed his notes and pocketed his napoleons with a vast satisfaction. For they meant power, they meant opportunity; every one should be paid away against so many hours by her side, at her feet.

Meanwhile day after day he had reminded himself of Louie, and day after day he had forgotten her again, absolutely, altogether. Once or twice he met her on the stairs, started, remembered, and tried to question her as to what she was doing. But she was still angry with him for his interference on the day of the pose; and he could get very little out of her. Let him only leave her alone; she was not a school-child to be meddled with; that he would find out. As to Madame Cervin, she was a little fool, and her meanness in money matters was disgraceful; but she, Louie, could put up with her. One of these meetings took place on the day of his letters to the bank and to John. Louie asked him abruptly when he thought of returning. He flushed

deeply, stammered, said he was inclined to stay longer, but of course she could be sent home. An escort could be found for her. She stared at him ; then suddenly her black eyes sparkled, and she laughed so that the sound echoed up the dark stairs. David hotly inquired what she meant ; but she ran up still laughing loudly, and he was left to digest her scornful amusement as best he could.

Not long after he found the Cervins' door open as he passed, and in the passage saw a group of people, mostly men ; Montjoie in front, just lighting a cigar ; Louie's black hat in the background. David hurried past ; he loathed the sculptor's battered look, his insolent eye, his slow ambiguous manner ; he still burnt with the anger and humiliation of his ineffectual descent on the man's domain. But Madame Cervin, catching sight of him from the back of the party, pursued him panting and breathless to his own door. Would monsieur please attend to her ; he was so hard to get hold of ; never, in fact, at home ! Would he settle her little bill, and give her more money for current expenses ? Mademoiselle Louie required to be kept amused—*mon Dieu !*—from morning to night ! She had no objection, provided it were made worth her while. And how much longer did monsieur think of remaining in Paris ?

David answered recklessly that he did not know, paid her bill for Louie's board and extras without looking at it, and gave her a napoleon in hand, wherewith she departed, her covetous eyes aglow, her mouth full of excited civilities.

She even hesitated a moment at the door and then came back to assure him that she was really all discretion with regard to his sister ; no doubt monsieur had heard some unpleasant stories, for instance, of M. Montjoie ; she could understand perfectly, that coming from such a quarter, they had affected monsieur's mind ; but he would see that she could not make a sudden quarrel with one of her husband's old friends ; Mademoiselle Louie (who was already her *chérie*) had taken a fancy to pose for this statue ; it was surely better to indulge her than to rouse her self-will, but she could assure monsieur that she had looked after her as though it had been her own daughter.

David stood impatiently listening. In a few minutes he was to be with Elise at the corner of the Rue Lafitte. Of course it was all right !—and if it were not, he could not mend it. The woman was vulgar and grasping, but what reason was there to think anything else that was evil of her ? Probably she had put up with Louie more easily than a woman of a higher type would have done. At any rate she was doing her best, and what more could be asked of him than he had done ? Louie behaved outrageously in Manchester ; he could not help it, either there or here. He had interfered again and again, and had always been a fool for his pains. Let her choose for herself. A number of old and long-hidden exasperations seemed now to emerge whenever he thought of his sister.

Five minutes later he was in the Rue Lafitte.

It was Elise's caprice that they should always meet in this way, out of doors; at the corner of their own street; on the steps of the Madeleine; beneath the Vendôme Column; in front of a particular bonbon shop; or beside the third tree from the Place de la Concorde in the northern alley of the Tuileries Gardens. He had been only once inside her studio since the first evening of their acquaintance.

His mind was full of excitement, for the Salon had been closed since the day before; and the awards of the jury would be informally known, at least in some cases, by the evening. Elise's excitement since the critical hours began had been pitiful to see. As he stood waiting he gave his whole heart to her and her ambitions, flinging away from him with a passionate impatience every other interest, every other thought.

When she came she looked tired and white. 'I can't go to galleries, and I can't paint,' she said, shortly. 'What shall we do?'

Her little black hat was drawn forward, but through the dainty veil he could see the red spot on either cheek. Her hands were pushed deep into the pockets of her light grey jacket, recalling the energetic attitude in which she had stood over Louie on the occasion of their first meeting. He guessed at once that she had not slept, and that she was beside herself with anxiety. How to manage her?—how to console her? He felt himself so young and raw; yet already his passion had awakened in him a hundred new and delicate perceptions.

'Look at the weather!' he said to her. 'Come out of town! let us make for the Gare St. Lazare, and spend the day at St. Germain.'

She hesitated.

'Taranne will write to me directly he knows—directly! He might write any time this evening. No, no!—I can't go! I must be on the spot.'

'He can't write *before* the evening. You said yourself before seven nothing could be known. We will get back in ample time, I swear.'

They were standing in the shade of a shop awning, and he was looking down at her, eagerly, persuasively. She had a debate with herself, then with a despairing gesture of the hands, she turned abruptly—

'Well then—to the station!'

When they had started, she lay back in the empty carriage he had found for her, and shut her eyes. The air was oppressive, for the day before had been showery, and the heat this morning was a damp heat which relaxed the whole being. But before the train moved, she felt a current of coolness, and hastily looking up she saw that David had possessed himself of the cheap fan which had been lying on her lap, and was fanning her with his gaze fixed upon her, a gaze which haunted her as her eyelids fell again.

Suddenly she fell into an inward perplexity, an inward impatience on the subject of her companion, and her relation to him. It had been all very well till yesterday! But now the artistic and professional situation had become so strained, so intense, she could hardly give him a thought. His presence there, and its tacit demands upon her, tried her nerves. Her mind was full of a hundred *misères d'atelier*, of imaginary enemies and intrigues; one minute she was all hope, the next all fear; and she turned sick when she thought of Taranne's letter.

What had she been entangling herself for? she whose whole life and soul belonged to art and ambition! This comradeship, begun as a caprice, an adventure, was becoming too serious. It must end!—end probably to-day, as she had all along determined. Then, as she framed the thought, she became conscious of a shrinking, a difficulty, which enraged and frightened her.

She sat up abruptly and threw back her veil.

David made a little exclamation as he dropped the fan.

'Yes!' she said, looking at him with a little frown, 'yes—what did you say?'

Then she saw that his whole face was working with emotion.

'I wish you would have stayed like that,' he said, in a voice which trembled.

'Why?'

'Because—because it was so sweet!'

She gave a little start, and a sudden red sprang into her cheek.

His heart leapt. He had never seen her blush for any word of his before.

'I prefer the air itself,' she said, bending forward and looking away from him out of the open window at the villas they were passing.

Yet, all the while, as the country houses succeeded each other and her eyes followed them, she saw not their fragrant, flowery gardens, but the dark face and tall young form opposite. He was handsomer even than when she had seen him first—handsomer far than her portrait of him. Was it the daily commerce with new forms of art and intelligence which Paris and her companionship had brought him?—or simply the added care which a man in love instinctively takes of the little details of his dress and social conduct?—which had given him this look of greater maturity, greater distinction? Her heart fluttered a little—then she fell back on the thought of Taranne's letter.

They emerged from the station at St. Germain into a fierce blaze of sun, which burned on the square red mass of the old château, and threw a blinding glare on the white roads.

'Quick! for the trees!' she said, and they both hurried over the open space which lay between them and the superb chestnut grove which borders the famous terrace. Once there all was well, and they could wander from alley to alley in a green shade, the white blossom-spikes shining in the sun overhead, and to

their right the blue and purple plain, with the Seine winding and dimpling, the river polders with their cattle, and far away the dim heights of Montmartre just emerging behind the great mass of Mont Valérien, which blocked the way to Paris. Such lights and shades, such spring leaves, such dancing airs!

Elise drew a long breath, slipped off her jacket which he made a joy of carrying, and loosened the black lace at her throat which fell so prettily over the little pink cotton underneath.

Then she looked at her companion unsteadily. There was excitement in this light wind, this summer sun. Her great resolve to 'end it' began to look less clear to her. Nay, she stood still and smiled up into his face, a very siren of provocation and wild charm—the wind blowing a loose lock about her eyes.

'Is this better than England—than your Manchester?' she asked him scornfully, and he—traitor!—flinging out of his mind all the bounties of an English May, all his memories of the white-thorn and waving fern and foaming streams set in the deep purple breast of the Scout—vowed to her that nowhere else could there be spring or beauty or sunshine, but only here in France and at St. Germain.

At this she smiled and blushed—no woman could have helped the blush. In truth, his will, steadily bent on one end, while hers was distracted by half a dozen different impulses, was beginning to affect her in a troubling, paralysing way. For all her parade of a mature and cynical enlightenment, she was just twenty; it was such a May day as never was; and when once she had let herself relax towards him again, the inward ache of jealous ambition made this passionate worship beside her, irrelevant as it was, all the more soothing, all the more luring.

Still she felt that something must be done to stem the tide, and again she fell back upon luncheon. They had bought some provisions on their way to the station in Paris. He might subsist on scenery and æsthetics if he pleased—as for her, she was a common person with common needs, and must eat.

'Oh, not here!' he cried, 'why, this is all in public. Look at the nursemaids, and the boys playing, and the carriages on the terrace. Come on a little farther. You remember that open place with the thorns and the stream?—there we should be in peace.'

She did not know that she wanted to be in peace; but she gave way.

So they wandered on past the chestnuts into the tangled depths of the old forest. A path sunk in brambles and fern took them through beech wood to the little clearing David had in his mind. A tiny stream much choked by grass and last year's leaves ran along one side of it. A fallen log made a seat, and the beech trees spread their new green fans overhead, or flung them out to right and left around the little space, and for some distance in front, till the green sprays and the straight grey stems were lost on all sides in a brownish pinkish mist which betrayed a girdle of oaks not yet conquered by the summer.

She took her seat on the log, and he flung himself beside her. Out came the stores in his pockets, and once more they made themselves childishly merry over a scanty meal, which left them still hungry.

Then for an hour or two they sat lounging and chattering in the warm shade, while the gentle wind brought them every spring scent, every twitter of the birds, every swaying murmur of the forest. David lay on his back against the log, his eyes now plunging into the forest, now watching the curls of smoke from his pipe mounting against the background of green, or the moist fleecy clouds which seemed to be actually tangled in the tree-tops, now fixed as long as they dared on his companion's face. She was not beautiful? Let her say it! For she had the softest mouth which drooped like a child with a grievance when she was silent, and melted into the subtlest curves when she talked. She had, as a rule, no colour, but her clear paleness, as contrasted with the waves of her light-gold hair, seemed to him an exquisite beauty. The eyebrows had an oriental trick of mounting at the corners, but the effect, taken with the droop of the mouth, was to give the face in repose a certain charming look of delicate and plaintive surprise. Above all it was her smallness which entranced him; her feet and hands, her tiny waist, the *finesse* of her dress and movements. All the women he had ever seen, Lucy and Dora among them, served at this moment only to make a foil in his mind for this little Parisian beside him.

How she talked this afternoon! In her quick reaction towards him she was after all more the woman than she had ever been. She chattered of her forlorn childhood, of her mother's woes and her father's iniquities, using the frankest language about these last; then of herself and her troubles. He listened and laughed; his look as she poured herself out to him was in itself a caress. Moreover, unconsciously to both, their relation had changed somewhat. The edge of his first ignorance and shyness had rubbed off. He was no longer a mere slave at her feet. Rather a new and sweet equality seemed at last after all these days to have arisen between them; a bond more simple, more natural. Every now and then he caught his breath under the sense of a coming crisis; meanwhile the May day was a dream of joy, and life an intoxication.

But he controlled himself long, being indeed in desperate fear of breaking the spell which held her to him this heavenly afternoon. The hours slipped by; the air grew stiller and sultrier. Presently, just as the sun was sinking into the western wood, a woman, carrying a bundle and with a couple of children, crossed the glade. One child was on her arm; the other, whimpering with heat and fatigue, dragged wearily behind her, a dead weight on its mother's skirts. The woman looked worn out, and was scolding the crying child in a thin exasperated voice. When she came to the stream, she put down her bundle, and finding a seat by the water, she threw back her cotton bonnet and began to

wipe her brow, with long breaths which were very near to groans. Then the child on her lap set up a shout of hunger, while the child behind her began to cry louder than before. The woman hastily raised the baby, unfastened her dress, and gave it the breast, so stifling its cries; then, first slapping the other child with angry vehemence, she groped in the bundle for a piece of sausage roll, and by dint of alternately shaking the culprit and stuffing the food into its poor open mouth, succeeded in reducing it to a chewing and sobbing silence. The mother herself was clearly at the last gasp, and when at length the children were quiet, as she turned her harshly outlined head so as to see who the other occupants of the glade might be, her look had in it the dull hostility of the hunted creature whose powers of self-defence are almost gone.

But she could not rest long. After ten minutes, at longest, she dragged herself up from the grass with another groan, and they all disappeared into the trees, one of the children crying again—a pitiable trio.

Elise had watched the group closely, and the sight seemed in some unexplained way to chill and irritate the girl.

'There is one of the drudges that men make,' she said bitterly, looking after the woman.

'Men?' he demurred; 'I suspect the husband is a drudge too.'

'Not he!' she cried. 'At least he has liberty, choice, comrades. He is not battered out of all pleasure, all individuality, that other human beings may have their way and be cooked for, and this wretched human race may last. The woman is always the victim, say what you like. But for *some* of us at least there is a way out!'

She looked at him defiantly.

A tremor swept through him under the suddenness of this jarring note. Then a delicious boldness did away with the tremor. He met her eyes straight.

'Yes—*love* can always find it,' he said under his breath—'or make it.'

She wavered an instant, then she made a rally.

'I know nothing about that,' she said scornfully; 'I was thinking of art. *Art* breaks all chains, or accepts none. The woman that has art is free, and she alone; for she has scaled the men's heaven and stolen their sacred fire.'

She clasped her hands tightly on her knee; her face was full of aggression.

David sat looking at her, trying to smile, but his heart sank within him.

He threw away his pipe, and laid his head down against the log, not far from her, drawing his hat over his eyes. So they sat in silence a little while, till he looked up and said, in a bright beseeching tone:

'Finish me that scene in *Hernani!*'

The day before, after a *matinée* of *Andromaque* at the Théâtre-Français, in a moment of rebellion and reaction against all things classical, they had both thrown themselves upon *Hernani.* She had read it aloud to him in a green corner of the Bois, having a faculty that way, and bidding him take it as a French lesson. He took it, of course, as a lesson in nothing but the art of making wild speeches to the woman one loves.

But now she demurred.

'It is not here.'

He produced it out of his pocket.

She shrugged her shoulders.

'I am not in the vein.'

'You said last week you were not in the vein,' he said, laughing tremulously, 'and you read me that scene from *Ruy Blas*, so that when we went to see Sarah Bernhardt in the evening I was disappointed!'

She smiled, not being able to help it, for all flattery was sweet to her.

'We must catch our train. I would never speak to you again if we were late!'

He held up his watch to her.

'An hour—it is, at the most, half an hour's walk.'

'*Ah, mon Dieu!*' she cried, clasping her hands. 'It is all over, the vote is given. Perhaps Taranne is writing to me now, at this moment!'

'Read—read! and forget it half an hour more.'

She caught up the book in a frenzy, and began to read, first carelessly and with unintelligible haste; but before a page was over, the artist had recaptured her, she had slackened, she had begun to interpret.

It was the scene in the third act where Hernani the outlaw, who has himself bidden his love, Doña Sol, marry her kinsman the old Duke, rather than link her fortunes to those of a ruined chief of banditti, comes in upon the marriage he has sanctioned, nay commanded. The bridegroom's wedding gifts are there on the table. He and Doña Sol are alone.

The scene begins with a speech of bitter irony from Hernani. His friends have been defeated and dispersed. He is alone in the world; a price is on his head; his lot is more black and hopeless than before. Yet his heart is bursting within him. He had bidden her, indeed, but how could she have obeyed! Traitress! false love! false heart!

He takes up the jewels one by one.

'*This necklace is brave work,—and the bracelet is rare—though not so rare as the woman who beneath a brow so pure can bear about with her a heart so vile! And what in exchange? A little love? Bah!—a mere trifle! . . . Great God! that one can betray like this—and feel no shame—and live!*'

For answer, Doña Sol goes proudly up to the wedding casket and, with a gesture matching his own, takes out the dagger from

its lowest depth. 'You stop halfway!' she says to him calmly, and he understands. In an instant he is at her feet, tortured with remorse and passion, and the magical love scene of the act develops. What ingenuity of tenderness, yet what truth!

'*She has pardoned me, and loves me! Ah, who will make it possible that I too, after such words, should love Hernani and forgive him? Tears!—thou weepest, and again it is my fault! And who will punish me? for thou wilt but forgive again! Ah, my friends are all dead!—and it is a madman speaks to thee. Forgive! I would fain love—I know not how. And yet, what deeper love could there be than this? Oh! Weep not, but die with me! If I had but a world, and could give it thee!*'

The voice of the reader quivered. A hand came upon the book and caught her hand, She looked up and found herself face to face with David, kneeling beside her. They stared at each other. Then he said, half choked:

'I can't bear it any more! I love you with all my heart—oh, you know—you know I do!'

She was stupefied for a moment, and then with a sudden gesture she drew herself away, and pushed him from her.

'Leave me alone—leave me free—this moment!' she said passionately. 'Why do you persecute and pursue me? What right have you? I have been kind to you, and you lay snares for me. I will have nothing more to do with you. Let me go home, and let us part.'

She got up, and with feverish haste tied her veil over her hat. He had fallen with his arms across the log, and his face hidden upon them. She paused irresolutely.

'Monsieur David!'

He made no answer.

She bent down and touched him.

He shook his head.

'No, no!—go!' he said thickly.

She bit her lip. The breath under her little lace tippet rose and fell with furious haste. Then she sat down beside him, and with her hands clasped on her knee began to plead with him in tremulous light tones, as though they were a pair of children. Why was he so foolish? Why had he tried to spoil their beautiful afternoon? She must go. The train would not wait for them. But he must come too. He *must*.

After a little he rose without a word, gathered up the book and her wrap, and off they set along the forest path.

She stole a glance at him. It seemed to her that he walked as if he did not know where he was or who was beside him.

Her heart smote her. When they were deep in a hazel thicket, she stole out a small impulsive hand, and slipped it into his, which hung beside him. He started. Presently she felt a slight pressure, but it relaxed instantly, and she took back her hand, feeling ashamed of herself, and aggrieved besides. She shot on in front of him, and he followed.

So they walked through the chestnuts and across the white road to the station in the red glow of the evening sun. He followed her into the railway carriage, did her every little service with perfect gentleness; then when they started he took the opposite corner, and turning away from her, stared, with eyes that evidently saw nothing, at the villas beside the line, at the children in the streets, at the boats on the dazzling river.

She in her corner tried to be angry, to harden her heart, to possess herself only with the thought of Taranne's letter. But the evening was not as the morning. That dark teasing figure at the other end, outlined against the light of the window, intruded, took up a share in her reverie she resented but could not prevent—nay, presently absorbed it altogether. Absurd! she had had love made to her before, and had known how to deal with it. The artist must have comrades, and the comrades may play false; well, then the artist must take care of herself.

She had done no harm; she was not to blame; she had let him know from the beginning that she only lived for art. What folly, and what treacherous, inconsiderate folly, it had all been!

So she lashed herself up. But her look stole incessantly to that opposite corner, and every now and then she felt her lips trembling and her eyes growing hot in a way which annoyed her.

When they reached Paris she said to him imperiously as he helped her out of the carriage, 'A cab, please!'

He found one for her, and would have closed the door upon her.

'No, come in!' she said to him with the same accent.

His look in return was like a blow to her, there was such an inarticulate misery in it. But he got in, and they drove on in silence.

When they reached the Rue Chantal she sprang out, snatched her key from the *concierge*, and ran up the stairs. But when she reached the point on that top passage where their ways diverged, she stopped and looked back for him.

'Come and see my letter,' she said to him, hesitating.

He stood quite still, his arms hanging beside him, and drew a long breath that stabbed her.

'I think not.'

And he turned away to his own door.

But she ran back to him and laid her hand on his arm. Her eyes were full of tears.

'*Please*, Monsieur David. We were good friends this morning. Be now and always my good friend!'

He shook his head again, but he let himself be led by her. Still holding him—torn between her quick remorse and her eagerness for Taranne's letter, she unlocked her door. One dart for the table. Yes! there it lay. She took it up; then her face blanched suddenly, and she came piteously up to David, who was standing just inside the closed door.

'Wish me luck, Monsieur David, wish me luck, as you did before!'

But he was silent, and she tore open the letter. '*Dieu!—mon Dieu!*'

It was a sound of ecstasy. Then she flung down the letter, and running up to David, she caught his arm again with both hands.

'*Triomphe! Triomphe!* I have got my *mention*, and the picture they skied is to be brought down to the line, and Taranne says I have done better than any other pupil of his of the same standing—that I have an extraordinary gift—that I must succeed, all the world says so—and two other members of the jury send me their compliments. Ah! Monsieur David'—in a tone of reproach—'be kind—be nice—congratulate me.'

And she drew back an arm's-length that she might look at him, her own face overflowing with exultant colour and life. Then she approached again, her mood changing.

'It is too *detestable* of you to stand there like a statue! ah! that it is! For I never deceived you, no, never. I said to you the first night—there is nothing else for me in the world but art—nothing! Do you hear? This falling in love spoils everything—*everything!* Be friends with me. You will be going back to England soon. Perhaps—perhaps'—her voice faltered—'I will take a week's more holiday—Taranne says I ought. But then I must go to work—and we will part friends—always friends—and respect and understand each other all our lives, *n'est-ce pas?*'

'Oh! let me go!' cried David fiercely, his loud strained voice startling them both, and flinging her hand away from him, he made for the door. But impulsively she threw herself against it, dismayed to find herself so near crying, and shaken with emotion from head to foot.

They stood absorbed in each other; she with her hands behind her on the door, and her hat tumbling back from her masses of loosened hair. And as she gazed she was fascinated; for there was a grand look about him in his misery—a look which was strange to her, and which was in fact the emergence of his rugged and Puritan race. But whatever it was it seized her, as all aspects of his personal beauty had done from the beginning. She held out her little white hands to him appealing.

'No! no!' he said roughly, trying to put her away, '*never—never*—friends! You may kill me—you shan't make a child of me any more. Oh! my God!' It was a cry of agony. 'A man can't go about with a girl in this way, if—if she is like you, and not—' His voice broke—he lost the thread of what he was saying, and drew his hand across his eyes before he broke out again. 'What—you thought I was just a raw cub, to be played with. Oh, I am too dull, I suppose, to understand! But I have grown under your hands anyway. I don't know myself—I should do you or myself a mischief if this went on. Let me go—and go home to-night!'

And again he made a threatening step forward. But when he came close to her he broke down.

'I would have worked for you so,' he said thickly. 'For your sake I would have given up my country. I would have made myself French altogether. It should have been marriage or no marriage as you pleased. You should have been free to go or stay. Only I would have laid myself down for you to walk over. I have some money. I would have settled here. I would have protected you. It is not right for a woman to be alone—anyone so young and so pretty. I thought you understood—that you must understand—that your heart was melting to me. I should have done your work no harm—I should have been your slave—you know that. That *cursed*, *cursed* art!'

He spoke with a low intense emphasis; then turning away he buried his face in his hands.

'David!'

He looked up startled. She was stepping towards him, a smile of ineffable charm floating as it were upon her tears.

'I don't know what is the matter with me!' she said tremulously. 'There is trouble in it, I know! It is the broken glass coming true. *Mais, voyons! c'est plus fort que moi!* Do you care so much—would it break your heart—would you let me work—and never, *never* get in the way? Would you be content that art should come first and you second? I can promise you no more than that—not one little inch! *Would* you be content? Say!'

He ran to her with a cry. She let him put his arms round her, and a shiver of excitement ran through her.

'What does it mean?' she said breathlessly. 'One is so strong one moment—and the next—like this! Oh, why did you ever come?'

Then she burst into tears, hiding her eyes upon his breast.

'Oh! I have been so much alone! but I have got a heart somewhere all the same. If you will have it, you must take the consequences.'

Awed by the mingling of his silence with that painful throbbing beneath her cheek, she looked up. He stooped—and their young faces met.

CHAPTER VII

DURING the three weeks which had ended for David and Elise in this scene of passion, Louie had been deliberately going her own way, managing even in this unfamiliar *milieu* to extract from it almost all the excitement or amusement it was capable of yielding her. All the morning she dragged Madame Cervin about the Paris streets; in the afternoon she would sometimes pose for Montjoie, and sometimes not; he had to bring her bonbons and theatre tickets to bribe her, and learn new English wherewith to flatter her. Then in the evenings she made the Cervins take her

to theatres and various entertainments more or less reputable, for which of course David paid. It seemed to Madame Cervin, as she sat staring beside them, that her laughs never fell in with the laughs of other people. But whether she understood or no, it amused her, and go she would.

A looker-on might have found the relations between Madame Cervin and her boarder puzzling at first sight. In reality they represented a compromise between considerations of finance and considerations of morals—as the wife of the *ancien prix de Rome* understood these last. For the ex-modiste was by no means without her virtues or her scruples. She had ugly manners and ideas on many points, but she had lived a decent life at any rate since her marriage with a man for whom she had an incomprehensible affection, heavily as he burdened and exploited her; and though she took all company pretty much as it came, she had a much keener sense now than in her youth of the practical advantages of good behaviour to a woman, and of the general reasonableness of the *bourgeois* point of view with regard to marriage and the family. Her youth had been stormy; her middle age tended to a certain conservative philosophy of common sense, and to the development of a rough and ready conscience.

Especially was she conscious of the difficulties of virtue. When Elise Delaunay, for instance, was being scandalously handled by the talkers in her stuffy *salon*, Madame Cervin sat silent. Not only had she her own reasons for being grateful to the little artist, but with the memory of her own long-past adventures behind her she was capable by now of a secret admiration for an unprotected and struggling girl who had hitherto held her head high, worked hard, and avoided lovers.

So that when the artist's wife undertook the charge of the good-looking English girl she had done it honestly, up to her lights, and she had fulfilled it honestly. She had in fact hardly let Louie Grieve out of her sight since her boarder was handed over to her.

These facts, however, represent only one side of the situation. Madame Cervin was now respectable. She had relinquished years before the *chasse* for personal excitement; she had replaced it by 'the *chasse* of the five-franc piece.' She loved her money passionately; but at the same time she loved power, gossip, and small flatteries. They distracted her, these last, from the depressing spectacle of her husband's gradual and inevitable decay. So that her life represented a balance between these various instincts. For some time past she had gathered about her a train of small artists, whom she mothered and patronised, and whose wild talk and pecuniary straits diversified the monotony of her own childless middle age. Montjoie, whose undoubted talent imposed upon a woman governed during all her later life by the traditions and the admirations of the artist world, had some time before established a hold upon her, partly dependent

on a certain magnetism in the man, partly, as Elise had suspected, upon money relations. For the grasping little *bourgeoise* who would haggle for a morning over half a franc, and keep a lynx-eyed watch over the woman who came to do the weekly cleaning, lest the miserable creature should appropriate a crust or a cold potato, had a weak side for her artist friends who flattered and amused her. She would lend to them now and then out of her hoards; she had lent to Montjoie in the winter when, after months of wild dissipation, he was in dire straits and almost starving.

But having lent, the thought of her jeopardised money would throw her into agonies, and she would scheme perpetually to get it back. Like all the rest of Montjoie's creditors she was hanging on the Mænad, which promised indeed to be the *chef-d'œuvre* of an indisputable talent, could that talent only be kept to work. When the sculptor—whose curiosity had been originally roused by certain phrases of Barbier's in his preliminary letters to his nephew, phrases embellished by Dubois' habitual *fanfaronnade* —had first beheld the English girl, he had temporarily thrown up his work and was lounging about Paris in moody despair, to Madame Cervin's infinite disgust. But at sight of Louie his artist's zeal rekindled. Her wild nature, her half-human eye, the traces of Greek form in the dark features—these things fired and excited him.

'Get me that girl to sit,' he had said to Madame Cervin, 'and the Mænad will be sold in six weeks!'

And Madame Cervin, fully determined on the one hand that Montjoie should finish his statue and pay his debts, and on the other that the English girl should come to no harm from a man of notorious character, had first led up to the sittings, and then superintended them with the utmost vigilance. She meant no harm—the brother was a fool for his pains—but Montjoie should have his sitter. So she sat there, dragon-like, hour after hour, knitting away with her little fat hands, while Louie posed, and Montjoie worked; and groups of the sculptor's friends came in and out, providing the audience which excited the ambition of the man and the vanity of the girl.

So the days passed. At last there came a morning when Louie came out early from the Cervins' door, shut it behind her, and ran up the ladder-like stairs which led to David's room.

'David!'

Her voice was pitched in no amiable key, as she violently shook the handle of the door. But, call and shake as she might, there was no answer, and after a while she paused, feeling a certain bewilderment.

'It is ridiculous! He can't be out; it isn't half-past eight. It's just his tiresomeness.'

And she made another and still more vehement attempt, all to no purpose. Not a sound was to be heard from the room

within. But as she was again standing irresolute, she heard a footstep behind her on the narrow stairs, and looking round saw the *concierge*, Madame Merichat. The woman's thin and sallow face—the face of a born pessimist—had a certain sinister flutter in it.

She held out a letter to the astonished Louie, saying at the same time with a disagreeable smile :

'What is the use of knocking the house down when there is no one there ?'

'Where is he ?' cried Louie, not understanding her, and looking at the letter with stupefaction.

The woman put it into her hand.

'No one came back last night,' she said with a shrug. 'Neither monsieur nor mademoiselle ; and this morning I receive orders to send letters to "Barbizon, près Fontainebleau."'

Louie tore open her letter. It was from David, and dated Barbizon. He would be there, it said, for nearly a month. If she could wait with Madame Cervin till he himself could take her home, well and good. But if that were disagreeable to her, let her communicate with him 'chez Madame Pyat, Barbizon, Fontainebleau,' and he would write to Dora Lomax at once, and make arrangements for her to lodge there, till he returned to Manchester. Some one could easily be found to look after her on the homeward journey if Madame Cervin took her to the train. Meanwhile he enclosed the money for two weeks' *pension* and twenty francs for pocket money.

No other person was mentioned in the letter, and the writer offered neither explanation nor excuses.

Louie crushed the sheet in her hand, with an exclamation, her cheeks flaming.

'So they are amusing themselves at Fontainebleau ?' inquired Madame Merichat, who had been leaning against the wall, twisting her apron and studying the English girl with her hard, malicious eyes. 'Oh ! I don't complain ; there was a letter for me too. Monsieur has paid all. But I regret for mademoiselle—if mademoiselle is surprised.'

She spoke to deaf ears.

Louie pushed past her, flew downstairs, and rang the Cervins' bell violently. Madame Cervin herself opened the door, and the girl threw herself upon her, dragged her into the *salon*, and then said with the look and tone of a fury :

'Read that !'

She held out the crumpled letter. Madame Cervin adjusted her spectacles with shaking hands.

'But it is in English !' she cried in despair.

Louie could have beaten her for not understanding. But, herself trembling with excitement, she was forced to bring all the French words she knew to bear, and between them, somehow, piecemeal, Madame Cervin was brought to a vague understanding of the letter.

'Gone to Fontainebleau!' she cried, subsiding on to the sofa. 'But why, with whom?'

'Why, with that girl, that *creature—can't* you understand?' said Louie, pacing up and down.

'Ah, I will go and find out all about that!' said Madame Cervin, and hastily exchanging the blue cotton apron and jacket she wore in the mornings in the privacy of her own apartment for her walking dress, she whisked out to make inquiries.

Louie was left behind, striding from end to end of the little *salon*, brows knit, every feature and limb tense with excitement. As the meaning of her discovery grew plainer to her, as she realised what had happened, and what the bearing of it must be on herself and her own position, the tumult within her rose and rose. After that day in the Louvre her native shrewdness had of course very soon informed her of David's infatuation for the little artist. And when it became plain, not only to her, but to all Elise Delaunay's acquaintance, there was much laughter and gossip on the subject in the Cervins' apartment. It was soon discovered that Louie had taken a dislike, which, perhaps, from the beginning had been an intuitive jealousy, to Elise, and had, moreover, no inconvenient sensitiveness on her brother's account, which need prevent the discussion of his love affairs in her presence. So the discussion went freely on, and Louie only regretted that, do what she would to improve herself in French, she understood so little of it. But the tone towards Elise among Montjoie's set, especially from Montjoie himself, was clearly contemptuous and hostile; and Louie instinctively enjoyed the mud which she felt sure was being thrown.

Yet, incredible as it may seem, with all this knowledge on her part, all this amusement at her brother's expense, all this blackening of Elise's character, the possibility of such an event as had actually occurred had never entered the sister's calculations.

And the reason lay in the profound impression which one side of his character had made upon her during the five months they had been together. A complete stranger to the ferment of the lad's imagination, she had been a constant and chafed spectator of his daily life. The strong self-restraint of it had been one of the main barriers between them. She knew that she was always jarring upon him, and that he was always blaming her recklessness and self-indulgence. She hated his Spartan ways—his teetotalism, the small store he set by any personal comfort or luxury, his powers of long-continued work, his indifference to the pleasures and amusements of his age, so far as Manchester could provide them. They were a reflection upon her, and many a gibe she had flung out at him about them. But all the same these ways of his had left a mark upon her; they had rooted a certain conception of him in her mind. She knew perfectly well that Dora Lomax was in love with him, and what did he care? 'Not a ha'porth!' She had never seen him turn his head for any girl; and when he had shown himself sarcastic on the subject of

her companions, she had cast about in vain for materials wherewith to retort.

And *now!* That he should fall in love with this French girl—that was natural enough ; it had amused and pleased her to see him lose his head and make a fool of himself like other people ; but that he should run away with her after a fortnight, without apparently a word of marrying her—leaving his sister in the lurch—

'*Hypocrite!*'

She clenched her hands as she walked. What was really surging in her was that feeling of *ownership* with regard to David which had played so large a part in their childhood, even when she had teased and plagued him most. She might worry and defy him ; but no sooner did another woman appropriate him, threaten to terminate for good that hold of his sister upon him which had been so lately renewed, than she was flooded with jealous rage. David had escaped her—he was hers no longer—he was Elise Delaunay's ! Nothing that she did could scandalise or make him angry any more. He had sent her money and washed his hands of her. As to his escorting her back to England in two or three weeks, that was just a lie! A man who takes such a plunge does not emerge so soon or so easily. No, she would have to go back by herself, leaving him to his intrigue. The very calmness and secretiveness of his letter was an insult. 'Mind your own business, little girl—go home to work—and be good!'—that was what it seemed to say to her. She set her teeth over it in her wild anger and pride.

At the same moment the outer door opened and Madame Cervin came bustling back again, bursting with news and indignation.

Oh, there was no doubt at all about it, they had gone off together! Madame Merichat had seen them come downstairs about noon the day before. He was carrying a black bag and a couple of parcels. She also was laden ; and about halfway down the street, Madame Merichat, watching from her window, had seen them hail a cab, get into it, and drive away, the cab turning to the right when they reached the Boulevard.

Madame Cervin's wrath was loud, and stimulated moreover by personal alarm. One moment, remembering the scene in Montjoie's studio, she cried out, like the sister, on the brother's hypocrisy ; the next she reminded her boarder that there was two weeks' *pension* owing.

Louie smiled scornfully, drew out the notes from David's letter and flung them on the table. Then Madame Cervin softened, and took occasion to remember that condolence with the sister was at least as appropriate to the situation as abuse of the brother. She attempted some consolation, nay, even some caresses, but Louie very soon shook her off.

'Don't talk to me! don't kiss me!' she said impatiently.

And she swept out of the room, went to her own, and locked

the door. Then she threw herself face downwards on her bed, and remained there for some time hardly moving. But with every minute that passed, as it seemed, the inward smart grew sharper. She had been hardly conscious of it, at first, this smart, in her rage and pride, but it was there.

At last she could bear it quietly no longer. She sprang up and looked about her. There, just inside the open press which held her wardrobe, were some soft white folds of stuff. Her eye gleamed: she ran to the cupboard and took out the Mænad's dress. During the last few days she had somewhat tired of the sittings—she had at any rate been capricious and tiresome about them; and Montjoie, who was more in earnest about this statue than he had been about any work for years, was at his wit's end, first to control his own temper, and next so to lure or drive his strange sitter as to manage her without offending her.

But to-day the dress recalled David—promised distraction and retaliation. She slipped off her tight gingham with hasty fingers, and in a few seconds she was transformed. The light folds floated about her as she walked impetuously up and down, studying every movement in the glass, intoxicated by the polished clearness and whiteness of her own neck and shoulders, the curves of her own grace and youth. Many a night, even after a long sitting, had she locked her door, made the gas flare, and sat absorbed before her mirror in this guise, throwing herself into one attitude after another, naïvely regretting that sculpture took so long, and that Montjoie could not fix them all. The ecstasy of self-worship in which the whole process issued was but the fruition of that childish habit which had wrought with childish things for the same end—with a couple of rushlights, an old sheet and primroses from the brook.

Her black abundant hair was still curled about her head. Well, she could pull it down in the studio—now for a wrap—and then no noise! She would slip downstairs so that madame should know nothing about it. She was tired of that woman always at her elbow. Let her go marketing and leave other people in peace.

But before she threw on her wrap she stood still a moment, her nostril quivering, expanding, one hand on her hip, the other swinging her Mænad's tambourine. She knew very little of this sculptor-man—she did not understand him; but he interested, to some extent overawed, her. He had poured out upon her the coarsest flatteries, yet she realised that he had not made love to her. Perhaps Madame Cervin had been in the way. Well, now for a surprise and a *tête-à-tête!* A dare-devil look—her mother's look—sprang into her eyes.

She opened the door, and listened. No one in the little passage, only a distant sound of rapid talking, which suggested to the girl that madame was at that moment enjoying the discussion of her boarder's affairs with monsieur, who was still in bed. She hurried on a waterproof which covered her almost

from top to toe. Then, holding up her draperies, she stole out, and on to the public stairs.

They were deserted, and running down them she turned to the right at the bottom and soon found herself at the high studio door.

As she raised her hand to the bell she flushed with passion.

'I'll let him see whether I'll go home whining to Dora, while he's amusing himself,' she said under her breath.

The door was opened to her by Montjoie himself, in his working blouse, a cigarette in his mouth. His hands and dress were daubed with clay, and he had the brutal look of a man in the blackest of tempers. But no sooner did he perceive Louie Grieve's stately figure in the passage than his expression changed.

'You—you here! and for a sitting?'

She nodded, smiling. Her look had an excitement which he perceived at once. His eye travelled to the white drapery and the beautiful bare arm emerging from the cloak; then he looked behind her for Madame Cervin.

No one—except this Mænad in a waterproof. Montjoie threw away his cigarette.

'*Entrez, entrez, mademoiselle!*' he said, bowing low to her. 'When the heavens are blackest, then they open. I was in a mind to wring the Mænad's neck three minutes ago. Come and save your portrait!'

He led her in through the ante-room into the large outer studio. There stood the Mænad on her revolving stand, and there was the raised platform for the model. A heap of clay was to one side, and water was dripping from the statue on to the floor. The studio light had a clear evenness; and, after the heat outside, the coolness of the great bare room was refreshing.

They stood and looked at the statue together, Louie still in her cloak. Montjoie pointed out to her that he was at work on the shoulders and the left arm, and was driven mad by the difficulties of the pose. '*Tonnerre de Dieu!* when I heard you knock, I felt like a murderer; I rushed out to let fly at someone. And there was my Mænad on the mat!—all by herself, too, without that little piece of ugliness from upstairs behind her. I little thought this day—this cursed day—was to turn out so. I thought you were tired of the poor sculptor—that you had deserted him for good and all. Ah! *déesse—je vous salue!*'

He drew back from her, scanning her from head to foot, a new tone in his voice, a new boldness in his deep-set eyes—eyes which were already old. Louie stood instinctively shrinking, yet smiling, understanding something of what he said, guessing more.

There was a bull-necked strength about the man, with his dark, square, weather-beaten head, and black eyebrows, which made her afraid, in spite of the smooth and deprecating manner in which he generally spoke to women. But her fear of him was not unpleasant to her. She liked him; she would have liked above all to quarrel with him; she felt that he was her match.

He stepped forward, touched her arm, and took a tone of command.

'Quick, mademoiselle, with that cloak!'

She mounted the steps, threw off her cloak, and fell into her attitude without an instant's hesitation. Montjoie, putting his hands over his eyes to look at her, exclaimed under his breath.

It was perfectly true that, libertine as he was, he had so far felt no inclination whatever to make love to the English girl. Nor was the effect merely the result of Madame Cervin's vigilance. Personally, for all her extraordinary beauty, his new model left him cold. Originally he had been a man of the most complex artistic instincts, the most delicate and varied perceptions. They and his craftsman's skill were all foundering now in a sea of evil living. But occasionally they were active still, and they had served him for the instant detection of that common egotistical paste of which Louie Grieve was made. He would have liked to chain her to his model's platform, to make her the slave of his fevered degenerating art. But she had no thrill for him. While he was working from her his mind was often running on some little *grisette* or other, who had not half Louie Grieve's physical perfection, but who had charm, provocation, wit—all that makes the natural heritage of the French woman, of whatever class. At the same time it had been an irritation and an absurdity to him that, under Madame Cervin's eye, he had been compelled to treat her with the ceremonies due to *une jeune fille honnête.* For he had at once detected the girl's reckless temper. From what social stratum did she come—she and the brother? In her, at least, there was some wild blood! When he sounded Madame Cervin, however, she, with her incurable habit of vain mendacity, had only put her lodger in a light which Montjoie felt certain was a false one.

But this morning! Never had she been so superb, so inspiring! All the vindictive passion, all the rage with David that was surging within her, did but give the more daring and decision to her attitude, and a wilder power to her look. Moreover, the boldness of her unaccompanied visit to him provoked and challenged him. He looked at her irresolutely; then with an effort he turned to his statue and fell to work. The touch of the clay, the reaction from past despondency prevailed; before half an hour was over he was more enamoured of his task than he had ever yet been, and more fiercely bent on success. Insensibly as the time passed, his tone with her became more and more short, brusque, imperious. Once or twice he made some rough alteration in the pose, with the overbearing haste of a man who can hardly bear to leave the work under his hands even for an instant. When he first assumed this manner Louie opened her great eyes. Then it seemed to please her. She felt no regret whatever for the smooth voice; the more dictatorial he became the better she liked it, and the more submissive she was.

This went on for about a couple of hours—an orgie of work

on his side, of excited persistence on hers. Her rival in the clay grew in life and daring under her eyes, rousing in her, whenever she was allowed to rest a minute and look, a new intoxication with herself. They hardly talked. He was too much absorbed in what he was doing; and she also was either bent upon her task, or choked by wild gusts of jealous and revengeful thought. Every now and then as she stood there, in her attitude of eager listening, the wall of the studio would fade before her eyes, and she would see nothing but a torturing vision of David at Fontainebleau, wrapt up in 'that creature,' and only remembering his sister to rejoice that he had shaken her off. *Ah!* How could she sufficiently avenge herself! how could she throw all his canting counsels to the winds with most emphasis and effect!

At last a curious thing happened. Was it mere nervous reaction after such a strain of will and passion, or was it the sudden emergence of something in the sister which was also common to the brother—a certain tragic susceptibility, the capacity for a wild melancholy? For, in an instant, while she was thinking vaguely of Madame Cervin and her money affairs, *despair* seized her—shuddering, measureless despair—rushing in upon her, and sweeping away everything else before it. She tottered under it, fighting down the clutch of it as long as she could. It had no words, it was like a physical agony. All that was clear to her for one lurid moment was that she would like to kill herself.

The studio swam before her, and she dropped into the chair behind her.

Montjoie gave a protesting cry.

'Twenty minutes more!—*Courage!*'

Then, as she made no answer, he went up to her and put a violent hand on her shoulder—beside himself.

'You *shall* not be tired, I tell you. Look up! look at me!'

Under the stimulus of his master's tone she slowly recovered herself—her great black eyes lifted. He gazed into them steadily; his voice sank.

'You belong to me,' he said with breathless rapidity. 'Do you understand? What is the matter with you? What are those tears?'

A cry of nature broke from her.

'My brother has left me—with that girl!'

She breathed out the words into the ears of the man stooping towards her. His great brow lifted—he gave a little laugh. Then eagerly, triumphantly, he seized her again by the arms. '*A la bonne heure!* Then it is plainer still. You belong to me and I to you. In that statue we live and die together. Another hour, and it will be a masterpiece. Come! one more!'

She drank in his tone of mad excitement as though it were wine, and it revived her. The strange grip upon her heart relaxed; the nightmare was dashed aside. Her colour came back, and, pushing him proudly away from her, she resumed her pose without a word.

CHAPTER VIII

'Do you know, sir, that that good woman has brought in the soup for the second time? I can see her fidgeting about the table through the window. If we go on like this, she will depart and leave us to wait on ourselves. Then see if you get any soup out of *me*.'

David, for all answer, put his arm close round the speaker. She threw herself back against him, smiling into his face. But neither could see the other, for it was nearly dark, and through the acacia trees above them the stars glimmered in the warm sky. To their left, across a small grass-plat, was a tiny thatched house, buried under a great vine which embowered it all from top to base, and overhung by trees which drooped on to the roof, and swept the windows with their branches. Through a lower window, opening on to the gravel path, could be seen a small bare room, with a paper of coarse brown and blue pattern, brightly illuminated by a paraffin lamp, which also threw a square of light far out into the garden. The lamp stood on a table which was spread for a meal, and a stout woman, in a white cap and blue cotton apron, could be seen moving beside it.

'Come in!' said Elise, springing to her feet, and laying a compelling hand on her companion. 'Get it over! The moon is waiting for us out there!'

And she pointed to where, beyond the roofs of the neighbouring houses, rose the dark fringe of trees which marked the edge of the forest.

They went in, hand in hand, and sat opposite each other at the little rickety table, while the peasant woman from whom they had taken the house waited upon them. The day before, after looking at the *auberge*, and finding it full of artists come down to look for spring subjects in the forest, they had wandered on searching for something less public, more poetical. And they had stumbled upon this tiny overgrown house in its tangled garden. The woman to whom it belonged had let it for the season, but till the beginning of her 'let' there was a month; and, after much persuasion, she had consented to allow the strangers to hire it and her services as *bonne*, by the week, for a sum more congruous with the old and primitive days of Barbizon than with the later claims of the little place to fashion and fame. As the lovers stood together in the *salon*, exclaiming with delight at its bare floor, its low ceiling, its old bureau, its hard sofa with the Empire legs, and the dilapidated sphinxes on the arms, the owner of the house looked them up and down, from the door, with comprehending eyes. Barbizon had known adventures like this before!

But she might think what she liked; it mattered nothing to her lodgers. To 'a pair of romantics out of date,' the queer overgrown place she owned was perfection, and they took pos-

session of it in a dream of excitement and joy. From the top loft, still bare and echoing, where the highly respectable summer tenants were to put up the cots of their children, to the outside den which served for a kitchen, whence a wooden ladder led to a recess among the rafters, occupied by Madame Pyat as a bedroom ; from the masses of Virginia creeper on the thatched roof to the thicket of acacias and roses on the front grass-plat, and the high flowery wall which shut them off from the curious eyes of the street, it was all, in the lovers' feeling, the predestined setting for such an idyll as theirs.

And if this was so in the hot mornings and afternoons, how much more in the heavenly evenings and nights, when the forest lay whispering and murmuring under the moonlight, and they, wandering together arm in arm under the gaunt and twisted oaks of the Bas Bréau, or among the limestone blocks which strew the heights of this strange woodland, felt themselves part of the world about them, dissolved into its quivering harmonious life, shades among its shadows !

On this particular evening, after the hurried and homely meal, David brought Elise's large black hat, and the lace scarf which had bewitched him at St. Germain—oh, the joy of handling such things in this familiar, sacrilegious way !—and they strolled out into the long uneven street beyond their garden wall, on their way to the forest. The old inn to the left was in a clatter. Two *diligences* had just arrived, and the horses were drooping and panting at the door. A maidservant was lighting guests across the belittered courtyard with a flaring candle. There was a red glimpse of the kitchen with its brass and copper pans, and on the bench outside the gateway sat a silent trio of artists, who had worked well and dined abundantly, and were now enjoying their last smoke before the sleep, to which they were already nodding, should overtake them. The two lovers stepped quickly past, making with all haste for that leafy mystery beyond cleft by the retreating whiteness of the Fontainebleau road—into which the village melted on either side.

Such moonlight ! All the tones of the street, its white and greys, the reddish brown of the roofs, were to be discerned under it ; and outside in the forest it was a phantasmagoria, an intoxication. The little paths they were soon threading, paths strewn with limestone dust, wound like white threads among the rocks and through the blackness of the firs. They climbed them hand in hand, and soon they were on a height looking over a great hollow of the forest to the plain beyond, as it were a vast cup overflowing with moonlight and melting into a silver sky. The width of the heavens, the dim immensity of the earth, drove them close together in a delicious silence. The girl put the warmth of her lover's arm between her and the overpowering greatness of a too august nature. The man, on the other hand, rising in this to that higher stature which was truly his, felt himself carried out into nature on the wave of his own boundless emotion. That

cold Deism he had held so loosely broke into passion. The humblest phrases of worship, of entreaty, swept across the brain.

'Could one ever have guessed,' he asked her, his words stumbling and broken, 'that such happiness was possible?'

She shook her head, smiling at him.

'Yes, certainly!—if one has read poems and novels. Nothing to me is ever *more* than I expect,—generally less.'

Then she broke off hesitating, and hid her face against his breast. A pang smote him. He cried out in the old commonplaces that he was not worthy, that she must tire of him, that there was nothing in him to hold, to satisfy her.

'And three weeks ago,' she said, interrupting him, 'we had never heard each other's names. Strange—life is strange! Well, now,' and she quickly drew herself away from him, and holding him by both hands lightly swung his arms backwards and forwards, 'this can't last for ever, you know. In the first place—we shall *die:*' and throwing herself back, she pulled against him childishly, a spray of ivy he had wound round her hat drooping with fantastic shadows over her face and neck.

'Do you know what you are like?' he asked her, evading what she had said, while his eyes devoured her.

'No!'

'You are like that picture in the Louvre,—Da Vinci's St. John, that you say should be a Bacchus.'

'Which means that you find me a queer,—heathenish,—sort of creature?' she said, still laughing and swaying. 'So I am. Take care! Well now, a truce to love-making! I am tired of being meek and charming—this night excites me. Come and see the oaks in the Bas Bréau.'

And running down the rocky path before them she led him in and out through twisted leafy ways, till at last they stood among the blasted giants of the forest, the oaks of the Bas Bréau. In the emboldening daylight, David, with certain English wood scenes in his mind, would swear the famous trees of Fontainebleau had neither size nor age to speak of. But at night they laid their avenging spell upon him. They stood so finely on the broken ground, each of them with a kingly space about him; there was so wild a fantasy in their gnarled and broken limbs; and under the night their scanty crowns of leaf, from which the sap was yearly ebbing, had so lofty a remoteness.

They found a rocky seat in front of a certain leafless monster, which had been struck by lightning in a winter storm years before, and rent from top to bottom. The bare trunk with its torn branches yawning stood out against the rest, a black and melancholy shape, preaching desolation. But Elise studied it coolly.

'I know that tree by heart,' she declared. 'Corot, Rousseau, Diaz—it has served them all. I could draw it with my eyes shut.'

Then with the mention of drawing she began to twist her fingers restlessly.

'I wonder what the *concours* was to-day,' she said. 'Now that I am away that Bréal girl will carry off everything. There will be no bearing her—she was never second till I came.'

David took a very scornful view of this contingency. 'When you go back you will beat them all again; let them have their few weeks' respite! You told me yesterday you had forgotten the *atelier*.'

'Did I?' she said with a strange little sigh. 'It wasn't true —I haven't.'

With a sudden whim she pulled off his broad hat and threw it down. Reaching forward she took his head between her hands, and arranged his black curls about his brow in a way to suit her. Then, still holding him, she drew back with her head on one side to look at him. The moon above them, now at its full zenith of brightness, threw the whole massive face into strong relief, and her own look melted into delight.

'There is no model in Paris,' she declared, 'with so fine a head.' Then with another sigh she dropped her hold, and propping her chin on her hands, she stared straight before her in silence.

'Do you imagine you are *the first?*' she asked him presently, with a queer abruptness.

There was a pause.

'You told me so,' he said, at last, his voice quivering; 'don't deceive me—there is no fun in it—I believe it all!'

She laughed, and did not answer for a moment. He put out his covetous arms and would have drawn her to him, but she withdrew herself.

'What did I tell you? I don't remember. In the first place there was a cousin—there is always a cousin!'

He stared at her, his face flushing, and asked her slowly what she meant.

'You have seen his portrait in my room,' she said coolly.

He racked his brains.

'Oh! that portrait on the wall,' he burst out at last, in vain trying for a tone as self-possessed as her own, 'that man with a short beard?'

She nodded.

'Oh, he is not bad at all, my cousin. He is the son of that uncle and aunt I told you of. Only while they were rusting in the Gironde, he was at Paris learning to be a doctor, and enlarging his mind by coming to see me every week. When they came up to town to put in a claim to me, *they* thought me a lump of wickedness, as I told you; I made their hair stand on end. But Guillaume knew a good deal more about me; and *he* was not scandalised at all; oh dear, no. He used to come every Saturday and sit in a corner while I painted—a long lanky creature, rather good looking, but with spectacles—he has ruined his eyes

with reading. Oh, he would have married me any day, and let his relations shriek as they please ; so don't suppose, Monsieur David, that I have had no chances of respectability, or that my life began with you !' She threw him a curious look.

'Why do you talk about him ?' cried David, beside himself. 'What is your cousin to either of us ?'

'I shall talk of what I like,' she said wilfully, clasping her hands round her knees with the gesture of an obstinate child.

David stared away into the black shadow of the oaks, marvelling at himself—at the strength of that sudden smart within him, that half-frenzied restlessness and dread which some of her lightest sayings had the power to awaken in him.

Then he repented him, and turning, bent his head over the little hands and kissed them passionately. She did not move or speak. He came close to her, trying to decipher her face in the moonlight. For the first time since that night in the studio there was a film of sudden tears in the wide grey eyes. He caught her in his arms and demanded why.

'You quarrel with me and dictate to me,' she cried, wrestling with herself, choked by some inexplicable emotion, 'when I have given you everything—when I am alone in the world with you—at your mercy—I who have been so proud, have held my head so high !'

He bent over her, pouring into her ear all the words that passion could find or forge. Her sudden attack upon him, poor fellow, seemed to him neither unjust nor extravagant. She *had* given him everything, and who and what was he that she should have thrown him so much as a look !

Gradually her mysterious irritation died away. The gentleness of the summer night, the serenity of the moonlight, the sea-like murmur of the forest—these things sank little by little into their hearts, and in the calm they made, youth and love spoke again—siren voices !—with the old magic. And when at last they loitered home, they moved in a trance of feeling which wanted no words. The moon dropped slowly into the western trees ; midnight chimes came to them from the villages which ring the forest ; and a playing wind sprang up about them, cooling the girl's hot cheeks, and freshening the verdurous ways through which they passed.

But in the years which came after, whenever David allowed his mind to dwell for a short shuddering instant on these days at Fontainebleau, it often occurred to him to wonder whether during their wild dream he had ever for one hour been truly happy. At the height of their passion had there been any of that exquisite give and take between them which may mark the simplest love of the rudest lovers, but which is in its essence moral, a thing not of the senses but of the soul ? There is nothing else which is vital to love. Without it passion dies into space like

the flaming corona of the sun. With it, the humblest hearts may 'bear it out even to the edge of doom.'

There can be no question that after the storm of feeling, excitement, pity, which had swept her into his arms, he gained upon her vagrant fancy for a time day by day. Seen close, his social simplicity, his delicately tempered youth had the effect of great refinement. He had in him much of the peasant nature, but so modified by fine perception and wide-ranging emotion, that what had been coarseness in his ancestors was in him only a certain rich savour and fulness of being. His mere sympathetic, sensitive instinct had developed in him all the essentials of good manners, and books, poetry, observation had done the rest.

So that in the little matters of daily contact he touched and charmed her unexpectedly. He threw no veil whatever over his tradesman's circumstances, and enjoyed trying to make her understand what had been the conditions and prospects of his Manchester life. He had always, indeed, conceived his bookseller's profession with a certain dignity; and he was secretly proud, with a natural conceit, of the efforts and ability which had brought him so rapidly to the front. How oddly the Manchester names and facts sounded in the forest air! She would sit with her little head on one side listening; but privately he suspected that she understood very little of it; that she accepted him and his resources very much in the vague with the *insouciance* of Bohemia.

He himself, however, was by no means without plans for the future. In the first flush of his triumphant passion he had won from her the promise of a month alone with him, in or near Fontainebleau—her own suggestion—after which she was to go back in earnest to her painting, and he was to return to Manchester and make arrangements for their future life together. Louie must be provided for, and after that his ideas about himself were already tolerably clear. In one of his free intervals, during his first days in Paris, he had had a long conversation one evening with the owner of an important bookshop on the Quai St.-Michel. The man badly wanted an English clerk with English connections. David made certain of the opening, should he choose to apply for it. And if not there, then somewhere else. With the consciousness of capital, experience, and brains, to justify him, he had no fears. Meanwhile, John should keep on the Manchester shop, and he, David, would go over two or three times a year to stock-take and make up accounts. John was as honest as the day, and had already learnt much.

But although his old self had so far reasserted itself; although the contriving activity of the brain was all still there, ready to be brought to bear on this new life when it was wanted; Elise could never mistake him, or the true character of this crisis of his youth. The self-surrender of passion had transformed, developed him to an amazing extent, and it found its natural language. As she grew deeper and deeper into the boy's

heart, and as the cloud of diffidence which had enwrapped him since he came to Paris gave way, so that even in this brilliant France he ventured at last to express his feelings and ideas, the poet and thinker in him grew before her eyes. She felt a new consideration, a new intellectual respect for him.

But above all his tenderness, his womanish consideration and sweetness amazed her. She had been hotly wooed now and then, but with no one, not even 'the cousin,' had she ever been on terms of real intimacy. And for the rest she had lived a rough-and-tumble, independent life, defending herself first of all against the big boys of the farm, then against her father, or her comrades in the *atelier*, or her Bohemian suitors. The ingenuity of service David showed in shielding and waiting upon her bewildered her—had, for a time, a profound effect upon her.

And yet !—all the while—what jars and terrors from the very beginning ! He seemed often to be groping in the dark with her. Whole tracts of her thought and experience were mysteries to him, and grew but little plainer with their new relation. Little as he knew or would have admitted it, the gulf of nationality yawned deep between them. And those artistic ambitions of hers—as soon as they re-emerged on the other side of the first intoxication of passion—they were as much of a jealousy and a dread to him as before. His soul was as alive as it had ever been to the threat and peril of them.

Their relation itself, too—to her, perhaps, secretly a guarantee—was to him a perpetual restlessness. *L'union libre* as the French artist understands it was not in his social tradition, whatever might be his literary assimilation of French ideas. He might passionately adopt and defend it, because it was her will; none the less was he, at the bottom of his heart, both ashamed and afraid because of it. From the very beginning he had let her know that she had only to say the word and he was ready to marry her instantly. But she put him aside with an impatient wave of her little hand, a nervous, defiant look in her grey eyes. Yet one day, when in the little village shop of Barbizon, a woman standing beside Elise at the counter looked her insolently over from head to foot, and took no notice of a question addressed to her on the subject of one of the forest routes, the girl felt an unexpected pang of resentment and shame.

One afternoon, in a lonely part of the forest, she strained her foot by treading on a loose stone among the rocks. Tired with long rambling and jarred by the shock she sank down, looking white and ready to cry. Pain generally crushed and demoralised her. She was capable, indeed, of setting the body at defiance on occasion ; but, as a rule, she had no physical fortitude, and did not pretend to it.

David was much perplexed. So far as he knew, they were not near any of the huts which are dotted over the forest and

provide the tourist with *consommations* and carved articles. There was no water wherewith to revive her or to bandage the foot, for Fontainebleau has no streams. All he could do was to carry her. And this he did, with the utmost skill, and with a leaping thrill of tenderness which made itself felt by the little elfish creature in the clasp of his arms, and in the happy leaning of his dark cheek to hers, as she held him round the neck.

'Paul and Virginia!' she said to him, laughing. "*He bore her in his arms!*"—all heroes do it—in reality, most women would break the hero's back. 'Confess *I* am even lighter than you thought!'

'As light as Venus' doves,' he swore to her. 'Bid me carry you to Paris and see.'

'Paris!' At the mention of it she fell silent, and the corners of her mouth drooped into gravity. But he strode happily on, perceiving nothing.

Then when they got home, she limping through the village, he put on the airs of a surgeon, ran across to the grocer, who kept a tiny *pharmacie* in one corner of his miscellaneous shop, and conferred with him to such effect that the injured limb was soon lotioned and bandaged in a manner which made David inordinately proud of himself. Once, as he was examining his handiwork, it occurred to him that it was Mr. Ancrum who had taught him to use his fingers neatly. *Mr. Ancrum!* At the thought of his name the young man felt an inward shrinking, as though from contact with a cold and alien order of things. How hard to realise, indeed, that the same world contained Manchester with its factories and chapels, and this perfumed forest, this little overgrown house!

Afterwards, as he sat beside her, reading, as quiet as a mouse, so that she might sleep if the tumble-down Empire sofa did but woo her that way, she suddenly put up her arm and drew him down to her.

'Who taught you all this—this tenderness?' she said to him, in a curious wistful tone, as though her question were the outcome of a long reverie. 'Was it your mother?'

David started. He had never spoken to her or to anyone of his mother, and he could not bring himself to do so now.

'My mother died when I was five years old,' he said reluctantly. 'Why don't you go to sleep, little restless thing? Is the bandage right?'

'Quite. I can imagine,' she said presently in a low tone, letting him go, 'I can imagine one might grow so dependent on all this cherishing, so horribly dependent!'

'Well, and why not?' he said, taking up her hand and kissing it. 'What are we made for, but to be your bondslaves?'

She drew her hand away, and let it fall beside her with an impatient sigh. The poor boy looked at her with frightened eyes. Then some quick instinct came to the rescue, and his expression changed completely.

'I have thought it all out,' he began, speaking with a brisk, business-like air, 'what I shall do at Manchester, and when I get back here.'

And he hung over her, chattering and laughing about his plans. What did she say to a garret and a studio somewhere near the Quai St.-Michel, in the Quartier Latin, rooms whence they might catch a glimpse of the Seine and Notre-Dame, where she would be within easy reach of Taranne's studio, and the Luxembourg, and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, and the Louvre, rooms where after their day's work they might meet, shut out the world and let in heaven—a home consecrate at once to art and love?

The quick bright words flowed without a check; his eye shone as though it caught the light of the future. But she lay turned away from him, silent, till at last she stopped him with a restless gesture.

'Don't—don't talk like that! As soon as one dares to reckon on Him—*le bon Dieu* strikes—just to let one know one's place. And don't drive me mad about my art! You saw me try to draw this morning; you might be quiet about it, I think, *par pitié!* If I ever had any talent—which is not likely, or I should have had some notices of my pictures by this time—it is all dead and done for.'

And turning quite away from him, she buried her face in the cushion.

'Look here,' he said to her, smiling and stooping, 'shall I tell you something? I forgot it till now.'

She shook her head, but he went on:

'You remember this morning while I was waiting for you, I went into the inn to ask about the way to the Gorges d'Affremont. I had your painting things with me. I didn't know whether you wanted them or not, and I laid them down on the table in the *cour*, while I went in to speak to madame. Well, when I came out, there were a couple of artists there, those men who have been here all the time painting, and they had undone the strap and were looking at the sketch—you know, that bit of beechwood with the rain coming on. I rushed at them. But they only grinned, and one of them, the young man with the fair moustache, sent you his compliments. You must have, he said, "very remarkable dispositions indeed." Perhaps I looked as if I knew that before! Whose pupil were you? I told him, and he said I was to tell you to stick to Taranne. You were one of the *peintres de tempérament*, and it was they especially who must learn their grammar, and learn it from the classics; and the other man, the old bear who never speaks to anybody, nodded and looked at the sketch again, and said it was "amusing—not bad at all," and you might make something of it for the next Salon.'

Cunning David! By this time Elise had her arm round his neck, and was devouring his face with her keen eyes. Every-

thing was shaken off—the pain of her foot, melancholy, fatigue—and all the horizons of the soul were bright again. She had a new idea!—what if she were to combine his portrait with the beechwood sketch, and make something large and important of it? He had the head of a poet—the forest was in its most poetical moment. Why not pose him at the foot of the great beech to the left, give him a book dropping from his hand, and call it 'Rêverie'?

For the rest of the day she talked or sketched incessantly. She would hardly be persuaded to give her bandaged foot the afternoon's rest, and by eight o'clock next morning they were off to the forest, she limping along with a stick.

Two or three days of perfect bliss followed. The picture promised excellently. Elise was in the most hopeful mood, alert and merry as a bird. And when they were driven home by hunger, the work still went on. For they had turned their top attic into a studio, and here as long as the light lasted she toiled on, wrestling with the head and the difficulties of the figure. But she was determined to make it substantially a picture *en plein air*. Her mind was full of all the daring conceptions and ideals which were then emerging in art, as in literature, from the decline of Romanticism. The passion for light, for truth, was, she declared, penetrating, and revolutionising the whole artistic world. Delacroix had a studio to the south; she also would 'bedare the sun.'

At the end of the third day she threw herself on him in a passion of gratitude and delight, lifting her soft mouth to be kissed.

'*Embrasse-moi! Embrasse-moi! Blague à part,—je commence à me sentir artiste!*'

And they wandered about their little garden till past midnight, hand close in hand. She could talk of nothing but her picture, and he, feeling himself doubly necessary and delightful to her, overflowed with happiness and praise.

But next day things went less well. She was torn, overcome by the difficulties of her task. Working now in the forest, now at home, the lights and values had suffered. The general tone had neither an indoor nor an outdoor truth. She must repaint certain parts, work only out of doors. Then all the torments of the outdoor painter began: wind, which put her in a nervous fever, and rain, which, after the long spell of fine weather, began to come down on them, and drive them into shelter.

Soon she was in despair. She had been too ambitious. The landscape should have been the principal thing, the figure only indicated, a suggestion in the middle distance. She had carried it too far; it fought with its surroundings; the picture had no unity, no repose. Oh, for some advice! How could one pull such a thing through without help? In three minutes Taranne would tell her what was wrong.

In twenty-four hours more she had fretted herself ill. The picture was there in the corner, turned to the wall; he could only just prevent her from driving her palette-knife through it. And she was sitting on the edge of the sofa, silent, a book on her knee, her hands hanging beside her, and her feverish eyes wandering—wandering round the room, if only they might escape from David, might avoid seeing him—or so he believed. Horrible! It was borne in upon him that in this moment of despair he was little more to her than the witness, the occasion, of her discomfiture.

Oh! his heart was sore. But he could do nothing. Caresses, encouragements, reproaches, were alike useless. For some time she would make no further attempts at drawing; nor would she be wooed and comforted. She held him passively at arm's length, and he could make nothing of her. It was the middle of their third week; still almost the half left of this month she had promised him. And already it was clear to him that he and love had lost their first hold, and that she was consumed with the unspoken wish to go back to Paris, and the *atelier*. Ah, no!—*no!* With a fierce yet dumb tenacity he held her to her bargain. Those weeks were his; they represented his only hope for the future; she *should* not have them back.

But he, too, fell into melancholy and silence, and on the afternoon when this change in him first showed itself she was, for a time, touched, ashamed. A few pale smiles returned for him, and in the evening, as he was sitting by the open window, a newspaper on his knee, staring into vacancy, she came up to him, knelt beside him, and drew his half-reluctant arm about her. Neither said anything, but gradually her presence there, on his breast, thrilled through all his veins, filled his heart to bursting. The paper slid away; he put both arms about her, and bowed his head on hers. She put up her small hand, and felt the tears on his cheek. Then a still stronger repentance woke up in her.

'*Pauvre enfant!*' she said, pushing herself away from him, and tremulously drying his eyes. 'Poor Monsieur David—I make you very unhappy! But I warned you—oh, I *warned* you! What evil star made you fall in love with me?'

In answer he found such plaintive and passionate things to say to her that she was fairly melted, and in the end there was an effusion on both sides, which seemed to bring back their golden hours. But at bottom, David's sensitive instinct, do what he would to silence it, told him, in truth, that all was changed. He was no longer the happy and triumphant lover. He was the beggar, living upon her alms.

CHAPTER IX

Next morning David went across to the village shop to buy some daily necessaries, and found a few newspapers lying on the counter. He bought a *Débats*, seeing that there was a long

critique of the Salon in it, and hurried home with it to Elise. She tore it open and rushed through the article, putting him aside that he might not look over her. Her face blanched as she read, and at the end she flung the paper from her, and tottering to a chair sat there motionless, staring straight before her. David, beside himself with alarm, and finding caresses of no avail, took up the paper from the floor.

'Let it alone!' she said to him with a sudden imperious gesture. 'There is a whole paragraph about Bréal—her fortune is made. *La voilà lancée—arrivée!* And of me, not a line, not a mention! Three or four pupils of Taranne—all beginners—but *my* name—nowhere! Ah, but no—it is too much!'

Her little foot beat the ground, a hurricane was rising within her.

David tried to laugh the matter off. 'The man who wrote the wretched thing had been hurried—was an idiot, clearly, and what did one man's opinion matter, even if it were paid for at so much a column?'

'*Mais, tais-toi, donc!*' she cried at last, turning upon him in a fury. '*Can't* you see that everything for an artist—especially a woman—depends on the *protections* she gets at the beginning? How can a girl—helpless—without friends—make her way by herself? Some one must hold out a hand, and for me it seems there is no one—no one!'

The outburst seemed to his common sense to imply the most grotesque oblivion of her success in the Salon, of Taranne's kindness—the most grotesque sensitiveness to a few casual lines of print. But it wrung his heart to see her agitation, her pale face, the handkerchief she was twisting to shreds in her restless hands. He came to plead with her—his passion lending him eloquence. Let her but trust herself and her gift. She had the praise of those she revered to go upon. How should the carelessness of a single critic affect her? *Imbéciles!*—they would be all with her, at her feet, some day. Let her despise them then and now! But his extravagances only made her impatient.

'Nonsense!' she said, drawing her hand away from him; 'I am not made of such superfine stuff—I never pretended to be! Do you think I should be content to be an unknown genius? *Never!*—I must have my fame counted out to me in good current coin, that all the world may hear and see. It may be vulgar—I don't care! it is so. *Ah, mon Dieu!*' and she began to pace the room with wild steps, 'and it is my fault—my fault! If I were there on the spot, I should be remembered—they would have to reckon with me—I could keep my claim in sight. But I have thrown away everything—wasted everything—*everything!*'

He stood with his back to the window, motionless, his hand on the table, stooping a little forward, looking at her with a passion of reproach and misery; it only angered her; she lost all self-control, and in one mad moment she avenged on his poor heart all the wounds and vexations of her vanity. *Why* had he

ever persuaded her? *Why* had he brought her away and hung a fresh burden on her life which she could never bear? Why had he done her this irreparable injury—taken all simplicity and directness of aim from her—weakened her energies at their source? Her only *milieu* was art, and he had made her desert it; her only power was the painter's power, and it was crippled, the fresh spring of it was gone. It was because she felt on her the weight of a responsibility, and a claim she was not made for. She was not made for love—for love at least as he understood it. And he had her word, and would hold her to it. It was madness for both of them. It was stifling—killing her!

Then she sank on a chair, in a passion of desperate tears. Suddenly, as she sat there, she heard a movement, and looking up she saw David at the door. He turned upon her for an instant, with a dignity so tragic, so true, and yet so young, that she was perforce touched, arrested. She held out a trembling hand, made a little cry. But he closed the door softly, and was gone. She half raised herself, then fell back again.

'If he had beaten me,' she said to herself with a strange smile, 'I could have loved him. *Mais!*'

She was all day alone. When he came back it was already evening; the stars shone in the June sky, but the sunset light was still in the street and on the upper windows of the little house. As he opened the garden gate and shut it behind him, he saw the gleam of a lamp behind the acacia, and a light figure beside it. He stood a moment wrestling with himself, for he was wearied out, and felt as if he could bear no more. Then he moved slowly on.

Elise was sitting beside the lamp, her head bent over something dark upon her lap. She had not heard the gate open, and she did not hear his steps upon the grass. He came closer, and saw, to his amazement, that she was busy with a coat of his—an old coat, in the sleeve of which he had torn a great rent the day before, while he was dragging her and himself through some underwood in the forest. She—who loathed all womanly arts, who had often boasted to him that she hardly knew how to use a needle!

In moving nearer, he brushed against the shrubs, and she heard him. She turned her head, smiling. In the mingled light she looked like a little white ghost, she was so pale and her eyes so heavy. When she saw him, she raised her finger with a childish, aggrieved air, and put it to her lips, rubbing it softly against them.

'It does prick so!' she said plaintively.

He came to sit beside her, his chest heaving.

'Why do you do that—for me?'

She shrugged her shoulders and worked on without speaking. Presently she laid down her needle and surveyed him.

'Where have you been all day? Have you eaten nothing, poor friend?'

He tried to remember.

'I think not; I have been in the forest.'

A little quiver ran over her face; she pulled at her needle violently and broke the thread.

'Finished!' she said, throwing down the coat and springing up. 'Don't tell your tailor who did it! I am for perfection in all things—*à bas l'amateur!* Come in, it is supper-time past. I will go and hurry Madame Pyat. *Tu dois avoir une faim de loup.*'

He shook his head, smiling sadly.

'I tell you, you *are* hungry, you *shall* be hungry!' she cried, suddenly flinging her arm round his neck, and nestling her fair head against his shoulder. Her voice was half a sob.

'Oh, so I am!—so I am!' he said, with a wild emphasis, and would have caught her to him. But she slipped away and ran before him to the house, turning at the window with the sweetest, frankest gesture to bid him follow.

They passed the evening close together, she on a stool leaning against his knee, he reading aloud Alfred de Musset's *Nuit de Mai*. At one moment she was all absorbed in the verse, carried away by it; great battle-cry that it is! calling the artist from the miseries of his own petty fate to the lordship of life and nature as a whole; the next she had snatched the book out of his hands and was correcting his accent, bidding him speak after her, put his lips so. Never had she been so charming. It was the coaxing charm of the softened child that cannot show its penitence enough. Every now and then she fell to pouting because she could not move him to gaiety. But in reality his sad and passive gentleness, the mask of feelings which would otherwise have been altogether beyond his control, served him with her better than any gaiety could have done.

Gaiety! it seemed to him his heart was broken.

At night, after a troubled sleep, he suddenly woke, and sprang up in an agony. *Gone!* was she gone already? For that was what her sweet ways meant. Ah, he had known it all along!

Where was she? His wild eyes for a second or two saw nothing but the landscape of his desolate dream. Then gradually the familiar forms of the room emerged from the gloom, and there—against the further wall—she lay, so still, so white, so gracious! Her childish arm, bare to the elbow, was thrown round her head, her soft waves of hair made a confusion on the pillow. After her long day of emotion she was sleeping profoundly. Whatever cruel secret her heart might hold, she was there still, his yet, for a few hours and days. He was persuaded in his own mind that her penitence had been the mere fruit of a compromise with herself, their month had still eight days to run, then—*adieu!* Art and liberty should reclaim their own. Meanwhile why torment the poor boy, who must any way take it hardly?

He lay there for long, raised upon his arm, his haggard look fixed on the sleeping form which by-and-by the dawn illuminated. His life was concentrated in that form, that light breath. He thought with repulsion and loathing of all that had befallen him before he saw her—with anguish and terror of those days and nights to come when he should have lost her. For in the deep stillness of the rising day there fell on him the strangest certainty of this loss. That gift of tragic prescience which was in his blood had stirred in him—he knew his fate. Perhaps the gift itself was but the fruit of a rare power of self-vision, self-appraisement. He saw and cursed his own timid and ignorant youth. How could he ever have hoped to hold a creature of such complex needs and passions? In the pale dawn he sounded the very depths of self-contempt.

But when the day was up and Elise was chattering and flitting about the house as usual without a word of discord or parting, how was it possible to avoid reaction, the re-birth of hope? She talked of painting again, and that alone, after these long days of sullen alienation from her art, was enough to bring the brightness back to their little *ménage* and to dull that strange second sight of David's. He helped her to set her palette, to choose a new canvas; he packed her charcoals, he beguiled some cold meat and bread out of Madame, and then before the heat they set out together for the Bas Bréau.

Just as they started he searched his pockets for a knife of hers which was missing, and thrusting his hand into a breast pocket which he seldom used, he brought out some papers at which he stared in bewilderment.

Then a shock went through him; for there was Mr. Gurney's letter, the letter in which the cheque for 600*l.* had been enclosed, and there was also that faded scrap of Sandy's writing which contained the father's last injunction to his son. As he held the papers he remembered—what he had forgotten for weeks—that on the morning of his leaving Manchester he had put them carefully into this breast pocket, not liking to leave things so interesting to him behind him, out of his reach. Never had he given a thought to them since! He looked down at them, half ashamed, and his eye caught the words:—'*I lay it on him now I'm dying to look after her. She's not like other children; she'll want it. Let him see her married to a decent man, and give her what's honestly hers. I trust it to him. That little lad—*' and then came the fold of the sheet.

'I have found the knife,' cried Elise from the gate. 'Be quick!'

He pushed the papers back and joined her. The day was already hot, and they hurried along the burning street into the shade of the forest. Once in the Bas Bréau Elise was not long in finding a subject, fell upon a promising one indeed almost at once, and was soon at work. This time there were to be no figures,

unless indeed it might be a dim pair of woodcutters in the middle distance, and the whole picture was to be an impressionist dream of early summer, finished entirely out of doors, as rapidly and cleanly as possible. David lay on the ground under the blasted oak and watched her, as she sat on her camp-stool, bending forward, looking now up, now down, using her charcoal in bold energetic strokes, her lip compressed, her brow knit over some point of composition. The little figure in its pink cotton was so daintily pretty, so full of interest and wilful charm, it might well have filled a lover's eye and chained his thoughts. But David was restless and at times absent.

'Tell me what you know of that man Montjoie?' he asked her at last, abruptly. 'I know you disliked him.'

She paused, astonished.

'Why do you ask? Dislike—I *detest and despise* him. I told you so.'

'But what do you know of him?' he persisted.

'No good!' she said quickly, going back to her work. Then a light broke upon her, and she turned on her stool, her two hands on her knees.

'*Tiens!*—you are thinking of your sister. You have had news of her?'

A conscious half-remorseful look rose into her face.

'No, I have had no news. I ought to have had a letter. I wrote, you remember, that first day here. Perhaps Louie has gone home already,' he said, with constraint. 'Tell me anyway what you know.'

'Oh, he!—well, there is only one word for him—he is a *brute!*' said Elise, drawing vigorously, her colour rising. 'Any woman will tell you that. Oh, he has plenty of talent,—he might be anything. Carpeaux took him up at one time, got him commissions. Five or six years ago there was quite a noise about him for two or three Salons. Then people began to drop him. I believe he was the most mean, ungrateful animal towards those who had been kind to him. He drinks besides—he is over head and ears in debt, always wanting money, borrowing here and there, then locking his door for weeks, making believe to be out of town—only going out at night. As for his ways with women' —she shrugged her shoulders—'Was your sister still sitting to him when we left, or was it at an end? Hasn't your sister been sitting to him for his statue?'

She paused again and studied him with her shrewd, bright eyes.

He coloured angrily.

'I believe so—I tried to stop it—it was no use.'

She laughed out.

'No—I imagine she does what she wants to do. Well, we all do, *mon ami!* After all'—and she shrugged her shoulders again—'I suppose she can do what I did?'

'What *you* did!'

She went on drawing in sharp deliberate strokes; her breath came fast.

'He met me on the stairs one night—it was just after I had taken the *atelier*. I knew no one in the house—I was quite defenceless there. He insulted me—I had a little walking-stick in my hand, my cousin had given me—I struck him with it across the face twice, three times—if you look close you will see the mark. You may imagine he tells fine stories of me when he gets the chance. *Oh! je m'en fiche!*'

The scorn of the last gesture was unmeasured.

'*Canaille!*' said David, between his teeth. 'If you had told me this!'

Her expression changed and softened.

'You asked me no questions after that quarrel we had in the Louvre,' she said, excusing herself. 'You will understand it is not a reminiscence one is exactly proud of; I did speak to Madame Cervin once—'

David said nothing, but sat staring before him into the far vistas of the wood. It seemed strange that so great a smart and fear as had possessed him since yesterday, should allow of any lesser smart within or near it. Yet that scrap of tremulous writing weighed heavy. *Where* was Louie; why had she not written? So far he had turned impatiently away from the thought of her, reiterating that he had done his best, that she had chosen her own path. Now in this fragrant quiet of the forest the quick vision of some irretrievable wreck presented itself to him; he thought of Mr. Ancrum—of John—and a cold shudder ran through him. In it spoke the conscience of a lifetime.

Elise meanwhile laid aside her charcoal, began to dash in some paint, drew back presently to look at it from a distance, and then, glancing aside, suddenly threw down her brushes, and ran up to David.

She sat down beside him, and with a coaxing, childish gesture, drew his arm about her.

'*Tu me fais pitié, mon ami!*' she said, looking up into his face. 'Is it your sister? Go and find her—I will wait for you.'

He turned upon her, his black eyes all passion, his lips struggling with speech.

'My place is here,' he said. 'My life is here!'

Then, as she was silent, not knowing in her agitation what to say, he broke out:

'What was in your mind yesterday, Elise? what is there to-day? There is something—something I *will* know.'

She was frightened by his look. Never did fear and grief speak more plainly from a human face. The great deep within had broken up.

'I was sorry,' she said, trembling, 'sorry to have hurt you. I wanted to make up.'

He flung her hand away from him with an impatient gesture.

'There was more than that!' he said violently; 'will you be like all the rest—betray me without a sign?'

'David!'

She bit her lip proudly. Then the tears welled up into her grey eyes, and she looked round at him—hesitated—began and stopped again—then broke into irrevocable confession.

'David!—Monsieur David!—how can it go on? *Voyons*—I said to myself yesterday—I am torturing him and myself—I *cannot* make him happy—it is not in me—not in my destiny. It must end—it must,—it *must*, for both our sakes. But then first,—first—'

'Be quiet!' he said, laying an iron hand on her arm. 'I knew it all.'

And he turned away from her, covering his face.

This time she made no attempt to caress him. She clasped her hands round her knees and remained quite still, gazing—yet seeing nothing—into the green depths which five minutes before had been to her a torturing ecstasy of colour and light. The tears which had been gathering fell, the delicate lip quivered.

Struck by her silence at last, he looked up—watched her a moment—then he dragged himself up to her and knelt beside her.

'Have I made you so miserable?' he said, under his breath.

'It is—it is—the irreparableness of it all,' she answered, half sobbing. 'No undoing it ever, and how a woman glides into it, how lightly, knowing so little!—thinking herself so wise! And if she has deceived herself, if she is not made for love, if she has given herself for so little—for an illusion—for a dream that breaks and must break—how dare the *man* reproach her, after all?'

She raised her burning eyes to him. The resentment in them seemed to be more than individual, it was the resentment of the woman, of her sex.

She stabbed him to the heart by what she said—by what she left unsaid. He took her little cold hand, put it to his lips—tried to speak.

'Don't,' she said, drawing it away and hiding her face on her knees. 'Don't say anything. It is not you, it is God and Nature that I accuse.'

Strange, bitter word!—word of revolt! He lay on his face beside her for many minutes afterwards, tasting the bitterness of it, revolving those other words she had said—'*an illusion—a dream that breaks—must break*.' Then he made a last effort. He came close to her, laid his arm timidly round her shoulders, bent his cheek to hers.

'Elise, listen to me a little. You say the debt is on my side—that is true—true—a thousand times true! I only ask you, *implore* you, to let me pay it. Let it be as you please—on what terms you please—servant or lover. All I pray for is to pay that debt, with my life, my heart.'

She shook her head softly, her face still hidden.

'When I am with you,' she said, as though the words were wrung out of her, 'I must be a woman. You agitate me, you divide my mind, and my force goes. There are both capacities in me, and one destroys the other. And I want—I *want* my art!'

She threw back her head with a superb gesture. But he did not flinch.

'You shall have it,' he said passionately, 'have it abundantly. Do you think I want to keep you for ever loitering here? Do you think I don't know what ambition and will mean? that I am only fit for kissing?'

He stopped almost with a smile, thinking of that harsh struggle to know and to have, in which his youth had been so far consumed night and day. Then words rushed upon him again, and he went on with a growing power and freedom.

'I never looked at a woman till I saw you!—never had a whim, a caprice. I have eaten my heart out with the struggle first for bread, then for knowledge. But when you came across me, then the world was all made new, and I became a new creature, your creature.'

He touched her face with a quick, tender hand, laid it against his breast, and spoke so, bending piteously down to her, within reach of her quivering mouth, her moist eyes:—

'Tell me this, Elise—answer me this! How can there be great art, great knowledge, only from the brain,—without passion, without experience? You and I have been *living* what Musset, what Hugo, what Shakespeare wrote,' and he struck the little volume of Musset beside him. 'Is not that worth a summer month? not worth the artist's while? But it is nearly gone. You can't wonder that I count the moments of it like a miser! I have had a *hard* life, and this has transfigured it. Whatever happens now in time or eternity, this month is to the good—for me and for you, Elise!—yes, for you, too! But when it is over,—see if I hold you back! We will work together—climb—wrestle, together. And on what terms you please,—mind that,—only dictate them. I deny your "illusion," your "dream that breaks." You *have* been happy! I dare to tell you so. But part now,—shirk our common destiny,—and you will indeed have given all for nothing, while I—'

His voice sank. She shook her head again, but as she drew herself gently away she was stabbed by the haggardness of the countenance, the pleading pathos of the eyes. His gust of speech had shaken her too—revealed new points in him. She bent forward quickly and laid her soft lips to his, for one light swift moment.

'Poor boy!' she murmured, 'poor poet!'

'Ah, that was enough!' he said, the colour flooding his cheeks. 'That healed—that made all good. Will you hide nothing from me, Elise—will you promise?'

'Anything,' she said with a curious accent, 'anything—if you will but let me paint.'

He sprang up, and put her things in order for her. They stood looking at the sketch, neither seeing much of it.

'I must have some more cobalt,' she said wearily. 'Look, my tube is nearly done.'

Yes, that was certain. He must get some more for her. Where could it be got? No nearer than Fontainebleau, alas! where there was a shop which provided all the artists of the neighbourhood. He was eagerly ready to go—it would take him no time.

'It will take you between two and three hours, sir, in this heat. But oh, I am so tired, I will just creep into the fern there while you are away, and go to sleep. Give me that book and that shawl.'

He made a place for her between the spurs of a great oak-root, tearing the brambles away. She nestled into it, with a sigh of satisfaction. 'Divine! Take your food—I want nothing but the air and sleep. *Adieu, adieu!*'

He stood gazing down upon her, his face all tender lingering and remorse. How white she was, how fragile, how shaken by this storm of feeling he had forced upon her! How could he leave her?

But she waved him away impatiently, and he went at last, going first back to the village to fetch his purse which was not in his pocket.

As he came out of their little garden gate, turning again towards the forest which he must cross in order to get to Fontainebleau, he became aware of a group of men standing in front of the inn. Two of them were the landscape artists already slightly known to him, who saluted him as he came near. The other was a tall fine-looking man, with longish grizzled hair, a dark commanding eye, the rosette of the Legion of Honour at his buttonhole, and a general look of irritable power. He wore a wide straw hat and holland overcoat, and beside him on the bench lay some artist's paraphernalia.

All three eyed David as he passed, and he was no sooner a few yards away than they were looking after him and talking, the new-comer asking questions, the others replying.

'Oh, it is she!' said the stranger impatiently, throwing away his cigar. 'Auguste's description leaves me no doubt of it, and the woman at the house in the Rue Chantal where I had the caprice to inquire one day, when she had been three weeks away, told me they were here. It is annoying. Something might have been made of her. Now it is finished. A handsome lad all the same!—of a rare type. *Non!—je me suis trompé—en devenant femme, elle n'a pas cessé d'être artiste!*'

The others laughed. Then they all took up their various equipments, and strolled off smoking to the forest. The man from Paris was engaged upon a large historical canvas represent-

ing an incident in the life of Diane de Poitiers. The incident had Diane's forest for a setting, but his trees did not satisfy him, he had come down to make a few fresh studies on the spot.

David walked his four miles to Fontainebleau, bought his cobalt, and set his face homewards about three o'clock. When he was halfway home, he turned aside into a tangle of young beechwood, parted the branches, and found a shady corner where he could rest and think. The sun was very hot, the high road was scorched by it. But it was not heat or fatigue that had made him pause.

So far he had walked in a tumult of conflicting ideas, emotions, terrors, torn now by this memory, now by that—his mind traversed by one project after another. But now that he was so near to meeting her again, though he pined for her, he suddenly and pitifully felt the need for some greater firmness of mind and will. Let him pause and think! Where *was* he with her?—what were his real, tangible hopes and fears? Life and death depended for him on these days—these few vanishing days. And he was like one of the last year's leaves before him, whirled helpless and will-less in the dust-storm of the road!

He had sat there an unnoticed time when the sound of some heavy carriage approaching roused him. From his green covert he could see all that passed, and instinctively he looked up. It was the Barbizon *diligence* going in to meet the five o'clock train at Fontainebleau, a train which in these lengthening days very often brought guests to the inn. The *correspondance* had been only begun during the last week, and to the dwellers at Barbizon the afternoon *diligence* had still the interest of novelty. With the perception of habit David noticed that there was no one outside; but though the rough blinds were most of them drawn down he thought he perceived some one inside—a lady. Strange that anyone should prefer the stifling *intérieur* who could mount beside the driver with a parasol!

The omnibus clattered past, and with the renewal of the woodland silence his mind plunged heavily once more into the agonised balancing of hope and fear. But in the end he sprang up with a renewed alertness of eye and step.

Despair? Impossible!—so long as one had one's love still in one's arms—could still plead one's cause, hand to hand, lip to lip. He strode homewards—running sometimes—the phrases of a new and richer eloquence crowding to his lips.

About a mile from Barbizon, the path to the Bas Bréau diverges to the right. He sped along it, leaping the brambles in his path. Soon he was on the edge of the great avenue itself, looking across it for that spot of colour among the green made by her light dress.

But there was no dress, and as he came up to the tree where he had left her, he saw to his stupefaction that there was no one there—nothing, no sign of her but the bracken and brambles he had beaten down for her some three hours before, and the trodden

grass where her easel had been. Something showed on the ground. He stooped and noticed the empty cobalt-tube of the morning.

Of course she had grown tired of waiting and had gone home. But a great terror seized him. He turned and ran along the path they had traversed in the morning making for the road; past the inn which seemed to have been struck to sleep by the sun, past Millet's studio on the left, to the little overgrown door in the brick wall.

No one in the garden, no one in the little *salon*, no one upstairs; Madame Pyat was away for the day, nursing a daughter-in-law. In all the house and garden there was not a sound or sign of life but the cat asleep on the stone step of the kitchen, and the bees humming in the acacias.

'Elise!' he called, inside and out, knowing already, poor fellow, in his wild despair that there could be no answer—that all was over.

But there was an answer. Elise was no untaught heroine. She played her part through. There was her letter, propped up against the gilt clock on the sham marble *cheminée*.

He found it and tore it open.

'You will curse me, but after a time you will forgive. I *could* not go on. Taranne found me in the forest, just half an hour after you left me. I looked up and saw him coming across the grass. He did not see me at first, he was looking about for a subject. I would have escaped, but there was no way. Then at last he saw me. He did not attack me, he did not persuade me, he only took for granted it was all over,—my Art! I must know best, of course; but he was sorry, for I had a gift. Had I seen the notice of my portrait in the "Temps," or the little mention in the "Figaro"? Oh, yes, Bréal had been very successful, and deserved to be. It was a brave soul, devoted to art, and art had rewarded her.

'Then I showed him my sketch, trembling—to stop his talk—every word he said stabbed me. And he shrugged his shoulders quickly; then, as though recollecting himself, he put on a civil face all in a moment, and paid me compliments. To an amateur he is always civil. I was all white and shaking by this time. He turned to go away, and then I broke down. I burst into tears—I said I was coming back to the *atelier*—what did he mean by taking such a cruel, such an insolent tone with me? He would not be moved from his polite manner. He said he was glad to hear it; mademoiselle would be welcome; but just as though we were complete strangers. *He* who has befriended me, and taught me, and scolded me since I was fourteen! I could not bear it. I caught him by the arm. I told him he *should* tell me all he thought. Had I really talent?—a future?

'Then he broke out in a torrent—he made me afraid of him—yet I adored him! He said I had more talent than any other pupil he had ever had; that I had been his hope and interest for

six years; that he had taught me for nothing—befriended me—worked for me, behind the scenes, at the Salon; and all because he knew that I must rise, must win myself a name, that when I had got the necessary technique I should make one of the poetical impressionist painters, who are in the movement, who sway the public taste. But I must give *all* myself—my days and nights—my thoughts, and brain, and nerves. Other people might have adventures and paint the better. Not I,—I was too highly strung—for me it was ruin. "*C'est un maître sévère—l'Art*," he said, looking like a god. "*Avec celui-là on ne transige pas. Ah! Dieu, je le connais, moi!*" I don't know what he meant; but there has been a tragedy in his life; all the world knows that.

'Then suddenly he took another tone, called me *pauvre enfant*, and apologised. Why should I be disturbed? I had chosen for my own happiness, no doubt. What was fame or the high steeps of art compared even with an *amour de jeunesse?* He had seen you, he said,—*une tête superbe—des épaules de lion!* I was a woman; a young handsome lover was worth more to me, naturally, than the drudgeries of art. A few years hence, when the pulse was calmer, it might have been all very well. Well! I must forgive him; he was my old friend. Then he wrung my hand, and left me.

'Oh, David, David, I must go! I *must.* My life is imprisoned here with you—it beats its bars. Why did I ever let you persuade me—move me? And I should let you do it again. When you are there I am weak. I am no cruel adventuress, I can't look at you and torture you. But what I feel for you is not love—no, no, it is not, poor boy! Who was it said "A love which can be tamed is no love"? But in three days—a week—mine had grown tame—it had no fears left. I am older than you, not in years, *mais dans l'âme*—there is what parts us.

'Oh! I must go—and you must not try to find me. I shall be quite safe, but with people you know nothing about. I shall write to Madame Pyat for my things. You need have no trouble.

'Very likely I shall pass you on the way, for if I hurry I can catch the *diligence.* But you will not see me. Oh, David, I put my arms round you! I press my face against you. I ask you to forgive me, to forget me, to work out your own life as I work out mine. It will soon be a dream—this little house—these summer days! I have kissed the chair you sat in last night, the book you read to me. *C'est déjà fini! Adieu! adieu!*'

He sat for long in a sort of stupor. Then that maddening thought seized him, stung him into life, that she had actually passed him, that he had seen her, not knowing. That little indistinct figure in the *intérieur*, that was she.

He sprang up, in a blind anguish. Pursuit! the *diligence* was slow, the trains doubtful, he might overtake her yet. He dashed into the street, and into the Fontainebleau road. After he had run nearly a mile, he plunged into a path which he believed was

a short cut. It led through a young and dense oak wood. He rushed on, seeing nothing, bruising himself and stumbling. At last a projecting branch struck him violently on the temple. He staggered, put up a feeble hand, sank on the grass against a trunk, and fainted.

CHAPTER X

It was between five and six o'clock in the morning. In the Tuileries Gardens flowers, grass, and trees were drenched in dew, the great shadow of the Palace spread grey and cool over terraces and slopes, while beyond the young sun had already shaken off all cumbering mists, and was pouring from a cloudless sky over the river with its barges and swimming-baths, over the bridges and the quays, and the vast courts and façades of the Louvre. Yet among the trees the air was still exquisitely fresh, the sun still a friend to be welcomed. The light morning wind swept the open, deserted spaces of the Gardens, playing merrily with the dust, the leaves, the fountains. Meanwhile on all sides the stir of the city was beginning, mounting slowly and steadily like a swelling tone.

On a bench under one of the trees in the Champs-Elysées sat a young man asleep. He had thrown himself against the back of the bench, his cheek resting on the iron, one hand on his knee. It was David Grieve; the lad's look showed that his misery was still with him, even in sleep.

He was dreaming, letting fall here and there a troubled and disconnected word. In his dream he was far from Paris—walking after his sheep among the heathery slopes of the Scout, climbing towards the grey smithy among the old mill-stones, watching the Red Brook slide by over its long, shallow steps of orange grit, and the Downfall oozing and trickling among its tumbled blocks. Who was that hanging so high above the ravine on that treacherous stone that rocked with the least touch? Louie—mad girl!—come back. Ah! too late—the stone rocks, falls; he leaps from block to block, only to see the light dress disappear into the stony gulf below. He cries—struggles—wakes.

He sat up, wrestling with himself, trying to clear his torpid brain. Where was he? His dream-self was still roaming the Scout; his outer eye was bewildered by these alleys, these orange-trees, these statues—that distant arch.

Then the hideous, undefined cloud that was on him took shape. Elise had left him. And Louie, too, was gone—he knew not where, save that it was to ruin. When he had arrived the night before at the house in the Rue Chantal, Madame Merichat could tell him nothing of Mademoiselle Delaunay, who had not been heard of. Then he asked, his voice dying in his throat before the woman's hard and cynical stare—the stare of one who found the chief savour of life in the misfortunes of her kind—he

asked for his sister and the Cervins. The Cervins were staying at Sèvres with relations, and were expected home again in a day or two; Mademoiselle Louie?—well, Mademoiselle Louie was not with them. Had she gone back to England? *Mais non!* A trunk of hers was still in the Cervins' vestibule. Did Madame Merichat know anything about her? the lad asked, forcing himself to it, his blanched face turned away. Then the woman shrugged her shoulders and spoke out.

If he really must know, she thought there was no doubt at all that where Monsieur Montjoie was, Mademoiselle Louie was too. Monsieur Montjoie had paid the arrears of his rent to the *propriétaire*, somehow or other, and had then made a midnight flitting of it so as to escape other creditors who were tired of waiting for his statue to be finished. He had got a furniture van there at night, and he and the driver and her husband between them had packed most of the things from the studio, and M. Montjoie had gone off in the van about one o'clock in the morning. But of course she did not know his address! she said so half-a-dozen times a day to the persons who called, and it was as true as gospel. Why, indeed, should M. Montjoie let her or anyone else know, that he could help? He had gone into hiding to keep honest people out of their money—that was what it meant.

Well, and the same evening Mademoiselle Louie also disappeared. Madame Cervin had been in a great way, but she and mademoiselle had already quarrelled violently, and madame declared that she had no fault in the matter and that no one could be held responsible for the doings of such a minx. She believed that madame had written to monsieur. Monsieur had never received it? Ah, well, that was not surprising! No one could ever read madame's writing, though it made her temper very bad to tell her so.

Could he have Madame Cervin's address? Certainly. She wrote it out for him. As to his old room?—no, he could not go back to it.

Monsieur Dubois had lately come back, with some money apparently, for he had paid his *loyer* just as the landlord was going to turn him out. But he was not at home.

Then she looked her questioner up and down, with a cool, inhuman curiosity working in her small eyes. So M'selle Elise had thrown him over already? That was sharp work! As for the rest of her news, her pessimism was interested in observing his demeanour under it. Certainly he did not seem to take it gaily; but what else did he expect with his sister?—'*Je vous demande!*'

The young man dropped his head and went out, shrinking together into the darkness. She called her husband to the door, and the two peered after him into the lamp-lit street, dissecting him, his mistress, and his sister with knifelike tongues.

David went away and walked up and down the streets, the quays, the bridges, hour after hour, feeling no fatigue, till sud-

denly, just as the dawn was coming on, he sank heavily on to the seat in the Champs-Elysées. The slip with Madame Cervin's address on it dropped unheeded from his relaxing hand. His nervous strength was gone, and he had to sit and bear his anguish without the relief of frenzied motion.

Now, after his hour's sleep, he was somewhat revived, ready to start again—to search again; but where? whither? *Somewhere* in this vast, sun-wrapped Paris was Elise, waking, perhaps, at this moment and thinking of him with a smile and a tear. He *would* find her, come what would; he could not live without her!

Then into his wild passion of loss and desire there slipped again that cold, creeping thought of Louie—ruined, body and soul—ruined in this base and dangerous Paris, while he still carried in his breast that little scrap of scrawled paper! And why? Because he had flung her to the wolves without a thought, that he and Elise might travel to their goal unchecked. '*My God!*'

The sense of some one near him made him look up. He saw a girl stopping near the seat whom in his frenzy he for an instant took for Louie. There was the same bold, defiant carriage, the same black hair and eyes. He half rose, with a cry.

The girl gave a quick, coarse laugh. She had been hurrying across the Avenue towards the nearest bridge when she saw him; now she came up to him with a hideous jest. David saw her face full, caught the ghastly suggestions of it—its vice, its look of mortal illness wrecking and blurring the cheap prettiness it had once possessed, and beneath all else the fierceness of the hunted creature. His whole being rose in repulsion; he waved her away, and she went, still laughing. But his guilty mind went with her, making of her infamy the prophecy and foretaste of another's.

He hurried on again, and again had to rest for faintness' sake, while the furies returned upon him. It seemed as though every passer-by were there only to scourge and torture him; or, rather, out of the moving spectacle of human life which began to flow past him with constantly increasing fulness, that strange selective poet-sense of his chose out the figures and incidents which bore upon his own story and worked into his own drama, passing by the rest. A group of persons presently attracted him who had just come apparently from the Rive Gauche, and were making for the Rue Royale. They consisted of a man, a woman, and a child. The child was a tiny creature in a preposterous feathered hat as large as itself. It had just been put down to walk by its father, and was dragging contentedly at its mother's hand, sucking a crust. The man had a bag of tools on his shoulder and was clearly an artisan going to work. His wife's face was turned to him and they were talking fast, lingering a little in the sunshine like people who had a few minutes to spare and were enjoying them. The man had the blanched, unwholesome look of the city workman who lives a sedentary life in foul air, and was, moreover, undersized and noways attractive, save perhaps for the keen amused eyes with which he was listening to his wife's chatter.

The great bell of Notre-Dame chimed in the distance. The man straightened himself at once, adjusted his bag of tools, and hurried off, nodding to his wife.

She looked after him a minute, then turned and came slowly along the alley towards the bench where David sat, idly watching her. The heat was growing steadily, the child was heavy on her hand, and she was again clearly on the way to motherhood. The seat invited her, and she came up to it.

She sat down, panting, and eyed her neighbour askance, detecting at once how handsome he was, and how unshorn and haggard. Before he knew where he was, or how it had begun, they were talking. She had no shyness of any sort, and, as it seemed to him, a motherly, half-contemptuous indulgence for his sex, as such, which fitted oddly with her young looks. Very soon she was asking him the most direct questions, which he had to parry as best he could. She made out at once that he was a foreigner and in the book trade, and then she let him know by a passing expression or two that naturally she understood why he was lounging there in that plight at that hour in the morning. He had been keeping gay company, of course, and had but just emerged from some nocturnal orgie or other. And then she shrugged her strong shoulders with a light, pitiful air, as though marvelling once more for the thousandth time over the stupidity of men who would commit these idiocies, would waste their money and health in them, say what women would.

Presently he discovered that she was giving him advice of different kinds, counselling him above all to find a good wife who would work and save his wages for him. A decent marriage was in truth an economy, though young men would never believe it.

David could only stare at her in return for her counsels. The difference between his place at that moment in the human comedy and hers was too great to be explained; it called only for silence or a stammering commonplace or two. Yet for a few moments the neighbourhood of her and her child was pleasant to him. She had a good comely head, which was bare under the sun, a little shawl crossed upon her ample bust, and a market-basket on her arm. The child was playing in the fine gravel at her feet, pausing every now and then to study her mother's eye with a furtive gravity, while the hat fell back and made a still more fantastic combination than before with the pensive little face.

Presently, tired of her play, she came to stand by her mother's knee, laying her head against it.

'*Mon petit ange! que tu es gentille!*' said the mother in a low, rapid voice, pressing her hand on the child's cheek. Then, turning back to David, she chattered on about the profit and loss of married life. All that she said was steeped in prose—in the prose especially of sous and francs; she talked of rents, of the price of food, of the state of wages in her husband's trade. Yet every here and there came an exquisite word, a flash. It seemed that she had been very ill with her first child. She did not mince

matters much even with this young man, and David gathered that she had not only been near dying, but that her illness had made a moral epoch in her life. She was laid by for three months; work was slack for her husband; her own earnings, for she was a skilled embroideress working for a great linen-shop in the Rue Vivienne, were no longer forthcoming. Would her husband put up with it, with the worries of the baby, and the *ménage*, and the sick wife, and that sharp pinch of want into the bargain, from which during two years she had completely protected him?

'I cried one day,' she said simply; 'I said to him, "You're just sick of it, ain't you? Well, I'm going to die. Go and shift for yourself, and take the baby to the *Enfants Trouvés. Alors*—"'

She paused, her homely face gently lit up from within. 'He is not a man of words—Jules. He told me to be quiet, called me *petite sotte.* "Haven't you slaved for two years?" he said. "Well, then, lie still, can't you?—*faut bien que chacun prenne son tour!*"'

She broke off, smiling and shaking her head. Then glancing round upon her companion again, she resumed her motherly sermon. That was the good of being married; that there was some one to share the bad times with, as well as the good.

'But perhaps,' she inquired briskly, 'you don't believe in being married? You are for *l'union libre?*'

She spoke like one touching on a long familiar question—as much a question indeed of daily life and of her class as those other matters of wages and food she had been discussing.

A slow and painful red mounted into the Englishman's cheek.

'I don't know,' he said stupidly. 'And you?'

'No, no!' she said emphatically, twice, nodding her head. 'Oh, I was brought up that way. My father was a Red—an Anarchist—a great man among them; he died last year. He said that liberty was everything. It made him mad when any of his friends accepted *l'union légale*—for him it was a treason. He never married my mother, though he was faithful to her all his life. But for me—' she paused, shaking her head slowly. 'Well, I had an elder sister—that says everything. *Faut pas en parler;* it makes me melancholy, and one must keep up one's spirits when one is like this. It is three years since she died; she was my father's favourite. When they buried her—she died in the hospital—I sat down and thought a little. It was abominable what she had suffered, and I said to myself, "Why?"'

The child swayed backward against her knee, so absorbed was it in its thumb and the sky, and would have fallen but that she caught it with her housewife's hand, being throughout mindful of its slightest movement.

'"Why?" I said. She was a good creature—a bit foolish perhaps, but she would have worked the shoes off her feet to please anybody. And they had treated her—but like a dog! It bursts one's heart to think of it, and I said to myself,—*le*

mariage c'est la justice! it is nothing but that. It is not what the priests say—oh! not at all. But it strikes me like that—*c'est la justice;* it is nothing but that!'

And she looked at him with the bright fixed eyes of one whose thoughts are beyond their own expressing. He interrupted her, wondering at the harsh rapidity of his own voice. 'But if it is the woman who will be free?—who will have no bond?'

Her expression changed, became shrewd, inquisitive, personal.

'Well, then!' she said with a shrug, and paused. 'It is because one is ignorant, you see, or one is bad—*on peut toujours être une coquine!* And one forgets—one thinks one can be always young, and love is all pleasure—and it is not true! one gets old—and there is the child—and one may die of it.'

She spoke with the utmost simplicity, yet with a certain intensity. Evidently she had a natural pride in her philosophy of life, as though in a possession of one's own earning and elaborating. She had probably expressed it often before in much the same terms, and with the same verbal hitches and gaps.

The young fellow beside her rose hastily, and bade her good morning. She looked mildly surprised at such an abrupt departure, but she was not offended.

'Good day, citizen,' she said, nodding to him. 'I disturb you?'

He muttered something and strode away.

How much time had that wasted of this irrecoverable day that was to set him on Elise's track once more! The first post had been delivered by this time. Elise must either return to her studio or remove her possessions; anyhow, sooner or later the Merichats must have information. And if they were forbidden to speak, well, then they must be bribed.

That made him think of money, and in a sudden panic he turned aside into a small street and examined his pockets. Nearly four napoleons left, after allowing for his debt to Madame Pyat, which must be paid that day. Even in his sick, stunned state of the evening before, when he was at last staggering on again, after his fall, to the Fontainebleau station, he had remembered to stop a Barbizon man whom he came across and give him a pencilled message for the deserted madame. He had sent her the Rue Chantal address, there would be a letter from her this morning. And he must put her on the watch, too—Elise could not escape him long.

But he must have more money. He looked out for a stationer's shop, went in and wrote a letter to John, which he posted at the next post-office.

It was an incoherent scrawl, telling the lad to change the cheque he enclosed in Bank of England notes and send them to the Rue Chantal, care of Madame Merichat. He was not to expect him back just yet, and was to say to any friend who might inquire that he was still detained.

That letter, with the momentary contact it involved with his Manchester life, brought down upon him again the thought of Louie. But this time he flung it from him with a fierce impatience. His brain, indeed, was incapable of dealing with it. Remorse? rescue? there would be time enough for that by-and-by. Meanwhile—to find Elise!

And for a week he spent the energies of every thought and every moment on this mad pursuit. Of these days of nightmare he could afterwards remember but a few detached incidents here and there.

He recollected patrols up and down the Rue Chantal; talks with Madame Merichat; the gleam in her eyes as he slipped his profitless bribes into her hand; visits to Taranne's *atelier*, where the *concierge* at last grew suspicious and reported the matter within; and finally an interview with the artist himself, from which the English youth emerged no nearer to his end than before, and crushed under the humiliation of the great man's advice. He could vaguely recall the long pacings of the Louvre; the fixed scrutiny of face after face; vain chases; ignominious retreats; and all the wretched stages of that slow descent into a bottomless despair!

At last there was a letter—the long-expected letter to Madame Merichat, directing the removal of Mademoiselle Delaunay's possessions from the Rue Chantal. It was written by a certain M. Pimodan, who did not give his address, but who declared himself authorised by Mademoiselle Delaunay to remove her effects, and named a day when he would himself superintend the process and produce his credentials. David passed the time after the arrival of this letter in a state of excitement which left him hardly master of his actions. He had a room at the top of a wretched little hotel close to the Nord station, but he hardly ate or slept. The noises of Paris were agony to him night and day; he lived in a perpetual nausea of mind and body, hardly able at times to distinguish between the images of the brain and the impressions coming from without.

Before the day came, a note was brought to him from the Rue Chantal. It was from M. Pimodan, and requested an interview.

'I should be glad to see you on Mademoiselle Delaunay's behalf. Will you meet me in the Garden of the Luxembourg in front of the central pavilion, at three o'clock to-morrow?

'GUSTAVE PIMODAN.'

Before the hour came David was already pacing up and down the blazing gravel in front of the Palace. When M. Pimodan came the Englishman in an instant recognised the cousin—the lanky fellow with the spectacles, who had injured his eyes by reading.

As soon as he had established this identification—and the two

men had hardly exchanged half-a-dozen sentences before the flashing inward argument was complete—a feeling of enmity arose in his mind, so intense that he could hardly keep himself still, could hardly bring his attention to bear on what he or his companion was saying. He had been brought so low that, with anyone else, he must have broken into appeals and entreaties. With this man —No!

As for M. Pimodan, the first sight of the young Englishman had apparently wrought in him also some degree of nervous shock; for the hand which held his cane fidgeted as he walked. He had the air of a person, too, who had lately gone through mental struggle; the red rims of the eyes under their large spectacles might be due either to chronic weakness or to recent sleeplessness.

But however these things might be, he took a perfectly mild tone, in which David's sick and irritable sense instantly detected the note of various offensive superiorities—the superiority of class and the superiority of age to begin with. He said in the first place that he was Mademoiselle Delaunay's relative, and that she had commissioned him to act for her in this very delicate matter. She was well aware—had been aware from the first day —that she was watched, and that M. Grieve was moving heaven and earth to discover her whereabouts. She did not, however, intend to be discovered; let him take that for granted. In her view all was over—their relation was irrevocably at an end. She wished now to devote herself wholly and entirely to her art, without disturbance or distraction from any other quarter whatever. Might he, under these circumstances, give M. Grieve the advice of a man of the world, and counsel him to regard the matter in the same light?

David walked blindly on, playing with his watch-chain. In the name of God whom and what was this fellow talking about? At the end of ten minutes' discourse on M. Pimodan's part, and of a few rare monosyllables on his own, he said, straightening his young figure with a nervous tremor:

'What you say is perfectly useless—I shall find her.'

Then a sudden angry light leapt into the cousin's eyes.

'You will *not* find her!' he said, drawing a sharp breath. 'It shows how little you know her, after all—compared with those who— No matter! Oh, you can persecute and annoy her! No one doubts that. You can stand between her and all that she now cares to live for—her art. But you can do nothing else; and you will not be allowed to do that long, for she is not alone, as you seem to think. She will be protected. There are resources, and we shall employ them!'

The cousin had gone beyond his commission. David guessed as much. He did not believe that Elise had set this man on to threaten him. What a fool! But he merely said with a sarcastic dryness, endeavouring the while to steady his parched lips and his eyelids swollen with weariness:

'*A la bonne heure!*—employ them. Well, sir, you know, I believe, where Mademoiselle Delaunay is. I wish to know. You will not inform me. I therefore pursue my own way, and it is useless for me to detain you any longer.'

'Know where she is!' cried the other, a triumphant flash passing across his sallow student's face; 'I have but just parted from her.'

But he stopped. As a physician, he was accustomed to notice the changes of physiognomy. Instinctively he put some feet of distance between himself and his companion. Was it agony or rage he saw?

But David recovered himself by a strong effort.

'Go and tell her, then, that I shall find her,' he said with a shaking voice. 'I have many things to say to her yet.'

'Absurd!' cried the other angrily. 'Very well, sir, we know what to expect. It only remains for us to take measures accordingly.'

And drawing himself up he walked quickly away, looking back every now and then to see whether he were followed or no.

'Supposing I did track him,' thought David vaguely, 'what would he do? Summon one of the various *gardiens* in sight?'

He had, however, no such intention. What could it have ended in but a street scuffle? Patience! and he would find Elise for himself in spite of that prater.

Meanwhile he descended the terrace, and threw himself, worn out, upon the first seat, to collect his thoughts again.

Oh, this summer beauty:—this festal moment of the great city! Palace and Garden lay under the full June sun. The clipped trees on the terraces, statues, alleys, and groves slept in the luminous dancing air. All the normal stir and movement of the Garden seemed to have passed to-day into the leaping and intermingling curves of the fountains; the few figures passing and repassing hardly disturbed the general impression of heat and solitude.

For hours David sat there, head down, his eyes on the gravel, his hands tightly clasped between his knees. When he rose at last it was to hurry down the Rue de Seine and take the nearest bridge and street northwards to the Quartier Montmartre. He had been dreaming too long! and yet so great by now was his confusion of mind that he was no nearer a fresh plan of operations than when the cousin left him.

When he arrived at Madame Merichat's *loge* it was to find that no new development had occurred. Elise's possessions were still untouched; neither she nor M. Pimodan had given any further sign. The *concierge*, however, gave him a letter which had just arrived for him. Seeing that it bore the Manchester postmark, he thrust it into his pocket unread.

When he entered the evil-smelling passage of his hotel, a *garçon* emerged from the restaurant, dived into the *salle de lecture*, and came out with an envelope, which he gave to the

Englishman. It had been left by a messenger five minutes before monsieur arrived. David took it, a singing in his ears; mounted to the first landing, where the gas burnt at midday, and read it.

'Gustave tells me you would not listen to him. Do you want to make me curse our meeting? Be a man and leave me to myself! While I know that you are on the watch I shall keep away from Paris—*voilà tout*. I shall eat my heart out,—I shall begin to hate you,—you will have chosen it so. Only understand this: I will *never* see you again, for both our sakes, if I can help it. Believe what I say—believe that what parts us is a fate stronger than either of us, and go! Oh! you men talk of love—and at bottom you are all selfish and cruel. Do you want to break me more than I am already broken? Set me free!—will you kill both my youth and my art together?'

He carefully refolded the letter and put it into its envelope. Then he turned and went downstairs again towards the street. But the same frowsy waiter who had given him his letter was on the watch for him. In the morning monsieur had commanded some dinner. Would he take it now?

The man's tone was sulky. David understood that he was not considered a profitable customer of the hotel—that, considering his queer ways, late hours, and small spendings, they would probably be glad to be rid of him. With a curious submission and shrinking he followed the man into the stifling restaurant and sat down at one of the tables.

Here some food was brought to him, which he tried to eat. But in the midst of it he was seized with so great a loathing, that he suddenly rose, so violently as to upset a plate of bread beside him, and make a waiter spring forward to save the table itself. He pushed his way to the glass-door into the street, totally unconscious of the stir his behaviour was causing among the stout women in bonnets and the red-faced men with napkins tucked under their chins who were dining near, fumbled at the handle, and tottered out.

'*Quel animal!*' said the enraged *dame du comptoir*, who had noticed the incident. 'Marie!'—this to the sickly girl who sat near with the books in front of her, 'enter that plate, and charge it high. To-morrow I shall raise the price of his room. One must really finish with him. *C'est un fou!*'

Meanwhile David, revived somewhat by the air, was already in the Boulevard, making for the Opéra and the Rue Royale. It was not yet seven, the Salon would be still open. The distances seemed to him interminable—the length of the Rue Royale, the expanse of the Place de la Concorde, the gay and crowded ways of the Champs-Elysées. But at last he was mounting the stairs and battling through the rooms at the top. He looked first at the larger picture which had gained her the *mention honorable*. It was a study of factory girls at their work, unequal, impatient, but full of a warm inventive talent—full of *her*. He knew its

history—the small difficulties and triumphs of it, the adventures she had gone through on behalf of it—by heart. That fair-haired girl in the corner was studied from herself; the tint of the hair, the curve of the cheek were exact. He strained his eyes to look, searching for this detail and that. His heart said farewell—that was the last, the nearest he should ever come to her on this earth! Next year? Ah, he would give much to see her pictures of next year, with these new perceptions she had created in him.

He stood a minute before the other picture, the portrait—a study from one of her comrades in the *atelier*—and then he wound his way again through the thronged and suffocating rooms, and out into the evening.

The excessive heat of the last few days was about to end in storm. A wide tempestuous heaven lay beyond the Arc de Triomphe; the red light struck down the great avenue and into the faces of those stepping westwards. The deep shade under the full-leafed trees—how thinly green they were still against the sky that day when she vanished from him beside the arch and their love began!—was full of loungers and of playing children; the carriages passed and repassed in the light. So it had been, the enchanting never-ending drama, before this spectator entered—so it would be when he had departed.

He turned southwards and found himself presently on the Quai de la Conférence, hanging over the river in a quiet spot where few people passed.

His frenzy of will was gone, and his last hope with it. Elise had conquered. Her letter had brought him face to face with those realities which, during this week of madness, he had simply refused to see. He could pit himself against her no longer. When it came to the point he had not the nerve to enter upon a degrading and ignoble conflict, in which all that was to be won was her hatred or her fear. That, indeed, would be the last and worst ruin, for it would be the ruin, not of happiness or of hope, but of love itself, and memory.

He took out her letter and re-read it. Then he searched for some of the writing materials he had bought when he had written his last letter to Manchester, and, spreading a sheet on the parapet of the river wall, he wrote:

'Be content. I think now—I am sure—that we shall never meet again. From this moment you will be troubled with me no more. Only I tell you for the last time that you have done ill—irrevocably ill. For what you have slain in yourself and me is not love or happiness, but *life* itself—the life of life!'

Foolish, incoherent words, as they seemed to him, but he could find no better. Confusedly and darkly they expressed the cry, the inmost conviction of his being. He could come no nearer at any rate to that desolation at the heart of him.

But now what next? Manchester?—the resumption and expansion of his bookseller's life—the renewal of his old friendships—the pursuit of money and of knowledge?

No. That is all done. The paralysis of will is complete. He cannot drive himself home, back to the old paths. The disgust with life has sunk too deep—the physical and moral collapse of which he is conscious has gone too far.

'*Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*'

There, deep in the fibre of memory lie these words, and others like them—the typical words of a religion which is still in some sense the ineradicable warp of his nature, as it had been for generations of his forefathers. His individual resources of speech, as it were, have been overpassed; he falls back upon the inherited, the traditional resources of his race.

He looked up. A last gleam was on the Invalides—on the topmost roof of the Corps Législatif; otherwise the opposite bank was already grey, the river lay in shade. But the upper air was still aglow with the wide flame and splendour of the sunset; and beneath, on the bridges and the water and the buildings, how clear and gracious was the twilight!

'*Who shall deliver me?*' '*Deliver thyself!*' One instant, and the intolerable pressure on this shrinking point of consciousness can be lightened, this hunger for sleep appeased! Nothing else is possible—no future is even conceivable. His life in flowering has exhausted and undone itself, so spendthrift has been the process.

So he took his resolve. Then, already calmed, he hung over the river, thinking, reviewing the past.

Six weeks—six weeks only!—yet nothing in his life before matters or counts by comparison. For this mood of deadly fatigue the remembrance of all the intellectual joys and conquests of the last few years has no savour whatever. Strange that the development of one relation of life—the relation of passion—should have been able so to absorb and squander the power of living! His fighting, enduring capacity, compared with that of other men, must be small indeed. He thinks of himself as a coward and a weakling. But neither the facts of the present nor the face of the future are altered thereby.

The relation of sex—in its different phases—as he sees the world at this moment, there is no other reality. The vile and hideous phase of it has been present to him from the first moment of his arrival in these Paris streets. He thinks of the pictures and songs at the 'Trois Rats' from which in the first delicacy and flush of passion he had shrunk with so deep a loathing; of the photographs and engravings in the shops and the books on the stalls; of some of those pictures he had passed, a few minutes before, in the Salon; of that girl's face in the Tuileries Gardens. The animal, the beast in human nature, never has it been so present to him before; for he has understood and realised it while loathing it, has been admitted by his own passion to those regions of human feeling where all that is most foul and all that is most beautiful are generated alike from the elemental forces of

life. And because he had loved Elise so finely and yet so humanly, with a boy's freshness and a man's energy, this animalism of the great city had been to him a perpetual nightmare and horror. His whole heart had gone into Regnault's cry—into Regnault's protest. For his own enchanted island had seemed to him often in the days of his wooing to be but floating on the surface of a ghastly sea, whence emerged all conceivable shapes of ruin, mockery, terror, and disease. It was because of the tremulous adoration which filled him from the beginning that the vice of Paris had struck him in this tragical way. At another time it might have been indifferent to him, might even have engulfed him.

But he !—he had known the best of passion ! He laid his head down on the wall, and lived Barbizon over again—day after day, night after night. Now for the first time there is a pause in the urging madness of his despair. All the pulses of his being slacken ; he draws back as it were from his own fate, surveys it as a whole, separates himself from it. The various scenes of it succeed each other in memory, set always—incomparably set—in the spring green of the forest, or under a charmed moonlight, or amid the flowery detail of a closed garden. Her little figure flashes before him—he sees her gesture, her smile ; he hears his own voice and hers ; recalls the struggle to express, the poverty of words, the thrill of silence, and that perpetual and exquisite recurrence to the interpreting images of poetry and art. But no poet had imagined better, had divined more than they in those earliest hours had *lived !* So he had told her, so he insisted now with a desperate faith.

But, poor soul ! even as he insists, the agony within rises, breaks up, overwhelms the picture. He lives again through the jars and frets of those few burning days, the growing mistrust of them, the sense of jealous terror and insecurity—and then through the anguish of desertion and loss. He writhes again under the wrenching apart of their half-fused lives—under this intolerable ache of his own wound.

This the best of passion ! Why his whole soul is still athirst and ahungered. Not a single craving of it has been satisfied. What is killing him is the sense of a thwarted gift, a baffled faculty—the faculty of self-spending, self-surrender. This, the best ?

Then the mind fell into a whirlwind of half-articulate debate, from the darkness of which emerged two scenes—fragments—set clear in a passing light of memory.

That workman and his wife standing together before the day's toil—the woman's contented smile as her look clung to the mean departing figure.

And far, far back in his boyish life—Margaret sitting beside 'Lias in the damp autumn dawn, spending on his dying weakness that exquisite, ineffable passion of tenderness, of pity.

Ah ! from the very beginning he had been in love with loving. He drew the labouring breath of one who has staked his all for some long-coveted gain, and lost.

Well!—Mr. Ancrum may be right—the English Puritan may be right—'sin' and 'law' may have after all some of those mysterious meanings his young analysis had impetuously denied them—he and Elise may have been only dashing themselves against the hard facts of the world's order, while they seemed to be transcending the common lot and spurning the common ways. What matter now! A certain impatient defiance rises in his stricken soul. He has made shipwreck of this one poor opportunity of life—confessed! now let the God behind it punish, if God there be. '*The rest is silence.*' With Elise in his arms, he had grasped at immortality. Now a stubborn, everlasting 'Nay' possesses him. There is nothing beyond.

He gathered up his letter, folded it, and put it into the breast-pocket of his coat. But in doing so his fingers touched once more the ragged edges of a bit of frayed paper.

Louie!

Through all these half-sane days and nights he had never once thought of his sister. She had passed out of his life—she had played no part even in the nightmares of his dreams.

But now!—while that intense denial of any reality in the universe beyond and behind this masque of life and things was still vibrating through his deepest being, it was as though a hand gently drew aside a curtain, and there grew clear before him, slowly effacing from his eyes the whole grandiose spectacle of buildings, sky, and river, that scene of the past which had worked so potently both in his childish sense and in Reuben's maturer conscience—the bare room, the iron bed, the dying man, one child within his arm, the other a frightened baby beside him.

It was frightfully clear, clearer than it had ever been in any normal state of brain, and as his mind lingered on it, unconsciously shaping, deepening its own creation, the weird impression grew that the helpless figure amid the bedclothes rose on its elbow, opened its cavernous eyes, and looked at him face to face, at the son whose childish heart had beat against his father's to the last. The boy's tortured soul quailed afresh before the curse his own remorse called into those eyes.

He hung over the water pleading with the phantom—defending himself. Every now and then he found that he was speaking aloud; then he would look round with a quick, piteous terror to see whether he had been heard or no, the parched lips beginning to move again almost before his fear was soothed.

All his past returned upon him, with its obligations, its fetters of conscience and kinship, so slowly forged, so often resisted and forgotten, and yet so strong. The moment marked the first passing away of the philtre, but it brought no recovery with it.

'*My God! my God! I tried, father—I tried. But she is lost, lost—as I am!*'

Then a thought found entrance and developed. He walked up and down the quay, wrestling it out, returning slowly and

with enormous difficulty, because of his physical state, to some of the normal estimates and relations of life.

At last he dragged himself off towards his hotel. He must have some sleep, or how could these hours that yet remained be lived through—his scheme carried out?

On the way he went into a shop still open on the boulevard. When he came out he thrust his purchase into his pocket, buttoned his coat over it, and pursued his way northwards with a brisker step.

CHAPTER XI

Two days afterwards David stood at the door of a house in the outskirts of the Auteuil district of Paris. The street had a half-finished, miscellaneous air; new buildings of the villa type were mixed up with old and dingy houses standing in gardens, which had been evidently overtaken by the advancing stream of Paris, having once enjoyed a considerable amount of country air and space.

It was at the garden gate of one of these older houses that David rang, looking about him the while at the mean irregular street and the ill-kept side-walks with their heaps of cinders and refuse.

A powerfully built woman appeared, scowling, in answer to the bell. At first she flatly refused the new-comer admission. But David was prepared. He set to work to convince her that he was not a Paris creditor, and, further, that he was well aware M. Montjoie was not at home, since he had passed him on the other side of the road, apparently hurrying to the railway station, only a few minutes before. He desired simply to see madame. At this the woman's expression changed somewhat. She showed, however, no immediate signs of letting him in, being clearly chosen and paid to be a watch-dog. Then David brusquely put his hand in his pocket. Somehow he must get this harridan out of the way at once! The same terror was upon him that had been upon him now for many days and nights—of losing command of himself, of being no more able to do what he had to do.

The creature studied him, put out a greedy palm, developed a smile still more repellent than her brutality, and let him in.

He found himself in a small, neglected garden; in front of him, to the right, a wretched, weather-stained house, bearing every mark of poverty and dilapidation, while to the left there stretched out from the house a long glass structure, also in miserable condition—a sculptor's studio, as he guessed.

His guide led him to the studio-door. Madame was there a few minutes ago. As they approached, David stopped.

'I will knock. You may go back to the house. I am madame's brother.'

She looked at him once more, reluctant. Then, in the clearer light of the garden, the likeness of the face to one she already

knew struck her with amazement; she turned and went off, muttering.

David knocked at the door; there was a movement within, and it was cautiously opened.

'*Monsieur est sorti.*—You!'

The brother and sister were face to face.

David closed the door behind him, and Louie retreated slowly, her hands behind her, her tall figure drawing itself up, her face setting into a frowning scorn.

'*You!*—what are you here for? We have done with each other!'

For answer David went up to a stove which was feebly burning in the damp, cheerless place, put down his hat and stick, and bent over it, stretching out his hands to the warmth. A chair was beside it, and on the chair some scattered bits of silk and velvet, out of which Louie was apparently fashioning a hat.

She stood still, observing him. She was in a loose dress of some silky Oriental material, and on her black hair she wore a red close-fitting cap with a fringe of golden coins dropping lightly and richly round her superb head and face.

'What is the matter with you?' she asked him grimly, after a minute's silence. 'She has left you—that's plain!'

The young man involuntarily threw back his head as though he had been struck, and a vivid colour rushed into his cheek. But he answered quickly:

'We need not discuss my affairs. I did not come here to speak of them. They are beyond mending. I came to see—before I go—whether there is anything I can do to help you.'

'Much obliged to you!' she cried, flinging herself down on the edge of a rough board platform, whereon stood a fresh and vigorous clay-study, for which she had just been posing, to judge from her dress. Beyond was the Mænad. And in the distance loomed a great block of marble, upon which masons had been working that afternoon.

'I am *greatly* obliged to you!' she repeated mockingly, taking the crouching attitude of an animal ready to attack. 'You are a pattern brother.'

Her glowing looks expressed the enmity and contempt she was at the moment too excited to put into words.

David drew his hand across his eyes with a long breath. How was he to get through it, this task of his, with this swollen, aching brain and these trembling limbs? Louie *must* let him speak; he bitterly felt his physical impotence to wrestle with her.

He went up to her slowly and sat down beside her. She drew away from him with a violent movement. But he laid his hand upon her knee—a shaking hand which his impatient will tried in vain to steady.

'Louie, look at me!' he commanded.

She did so unwillingly, but the proud repulsion of her lip did not relax.

'Well, I dare say you look pretty bad. Whose fault is it? everybody else but you knew what the creature was worth. Ask anybody!'

The lad's frame straightened and steadied. He took his hand from her knee.

'Say that kind of thing again,' he said calmly, 'and I walk straight out of that door, and you set eyes on me for the last time. That would be what you want, I dare say. All I wish to point out is, that you would be a great fool. I have not come here to-day to waste words, but to propose something to your advantage—your money-advantage,' he repeated deliberately, looking round the dismal building with its ill-mended gaps and rents, and its complete lack of the properties and appliances to which the humblest modern artist pretends. 'To judge from what I heard in Paris, and what I see, money is scarce here.'

His piteous sudden wish to soften her, to win a kind word from her, from anyone, had passed away. He was beginning to take command of her as in the old days.

'Well, maybe we are hard up,' she admitted slowly. 'People are such brutes and won't wait, and a sculptor has to pay out for a lot of things before he can make anything at all. But that statue will put it all right,' and she pointed behind her to the Mænad. 'It's me—it's the one you tried to put a stopper on.'

She looked at him darkly defiant. She was leaning back on one arm, her foot beating with the trick familiar to her. For reckless and evil splendour the figure was unsurpassable.

'When he sells that,' she went on, seeing that he did not answer, 'and he will sell it in a jiffy—it is the best he's ever done—there'll be heaps of money.'

David smiled.

'For a week perhaps. Then, if I understand this business aright—I have been doing my best, you perceive, to get information, and M. Montjoie seems to be better known than one supposed to half Paris—the game will begin again.'

'Never you mind,' she broke in, breathing quickly. 'Give me my money—the money that belongs to me—and let me alone.'

'On one condition,' he said quietly. 'That money, as you remember, is in my hands and at my disposal.'

'Ah! I supposed you would try to grab it!' she cried.

Even he was astonished at her violence—her insolence. The demon in her had never been so plain, the woman never so effaced. His heart dropped within him like lead, and his whole being shrank from her.

'Listen to me!' he said, seizing her strongly by the hand, while a light of wrath leapt into his changed and bloodshot eyes. 'This man will desert you; in a year's time he will have tired of you; what'll you do then?'

'Manage for myself, thank you! without any canting interference from you. I have had enough of that.'

'And fall again,' he said, releasing her, and speaking with a deliberate intensity; 'fall again—from infamy to infamy!'

She sprang up.

'Mind yourself!' she cried.

Miserable moment! As he looked at her he felt that that weapon of his old influence with her which, poor as it was, he had relied on in the last resort all his life, had broken in his hand. His own act had robbed it of all virtue. That pang of 'irreparableness' which had smitten Elise smote him now. All was undone—all was done!

He buried his face in his hands an instant. When he lifted it again, she was standing with her arms folded across her chest, leaning against an iron shaft which supported part of the roof.

'You had better go!' she said, still in a white heat. 'Why you ever came I don't know. If you won't give me that money, I shall get it somehow.'

Suddenly, as she spoke, everything—the situation, the subject of their talk, the past—seemed to be wiped out of David's brain. He stared round him helplessly. Why were they there—what had happened?

This blankness lasted a certain number of seconds. Then it passed away, and he painfully recovered his identity. But the experience was not new to him—it would recur—let him be quick.

This time a happier instinct served him. He, too, rose and went up to her.

'We are a pair of fools,' he said to her, half bitterly, half gently; 'we reproach and revile each other, and all the time I am come to give you not only what is yours, but all—all I have—that it may stand between you and—and worse ruin.'

'Ruin!' she said, throwing back her head and catching at the word; 'speak for yourself! If I am Montjoie's mistress, Elise Delaunay was yours. Don't preach. It won't go down.'

'I have no intention of preaching—don't alarm yourself,' he replied quietly, this time controlling himself without difficulty. 'I have only this to say. On the day when you become Montjoie's *wife*, all our father's money—all the six hundred pounds Mr. Gurney paid over to me in January, shall be paid to you.'

She started, caught her breath, tried to brazen it out.

'What is this idiocy for?' she asked coldly. 'What does marrying matter to you?'

He sank down again on the chair by the stove, being, indeed, unable to stand.

'Perhaps I can't tell you,' he said, after a pause, shading his face from her with his hand; 'perhaps I could not make plain to myself what I feel. But this I know—that this man with whom you are living here is a man for whom nobody has a good word. I want to give you a hold over him. But first!—stop a moment,'—he dropped his hand and looked up eagerly, 'will you leave him—leave him at once? I could arrange that.'

'Make your mind easy,' she said shortly; 'he suits me—I stay. I went with him, well, because I was dull—and because I wanted to make you smart for it, if you're keen to know!—but if you think I am anxious to go home, to be cried over by Dora and lectured by you, you're vastly mistaken. I can manage him! I have my hold on him—he knows very well what I am worth to him.'

She threw her head back superbly against the iron shaft, putting one arm round it and resting her hot cheek against it as though for coolness.

'Why should we argue?' he said sharply—after a wretched silence. 'I didn't come for that. If you won't leave him I have only this to say. On the day he marries you, if the evidence of the marriage is satisfactory to an English lawyer I have discovered in Paris and whose address I will give you, six hundred pounds will be paid over to you. It is there now, in the lawyer's hands. If not, I go home, and the law does not compel me to hand you over one farthing.'

She was silent, and began to pace up and down.

'Montjoie despises marriage,' she said presently.

'Try whether he despises money too,' said David, and could not for the life of him keep the sarcastic note out of his voice.

She bit her lip.

'And when, if it is done, must this precious thing be settled?'

'If your marriage does not take place within a month, Mr. O'Kelly—I will leave you his address,' he put his hand into his pocket—'has orders to return the money—'

'To whom?' she inquired, struck by his sudden break.

'To me, of course,' he said slowly. 'Is it perfectly plain? do you understand? Now, then, listen. I have inquired what the law is—you will have to be married both at the mairie and by the chaplain at the British embassy.'

She stopped suddenly in her walk and confronted him.

'If I am married at all,' she said abruptly, 'I shall be married as a Catholic.'

'A Catholic!' David stared at her. She enjoyed his astonishment.

'Oh, I have had that in my mind for a long time,' she said scornfully. 'There is a priest at that church with the steps, you know, near that cemetery place on the hill, who is very much interested in me indeed. He speaks English. I used to go to confession. Madame Cervin told me all about it, and how to do it; I did it exact! Oh, if I am to be married, that will make it plain sailing enough. It was awkward—while—'

She broke off and sat down again beside him, pondering and smiling as he had seen her do in Manchester, when she had the prospect of a new dress or some amusement that excited her.

'How have you been able to think about such things?' he asked her, marvelling.

'Think about them! What was the good of that? It's the churches I like, and the priests. Now there *is* something to see in the Paris churches, like the Madeleine—worth a dozen St. Damian's,—you may tell Dora that. The flowers and the dresses and the music—they *are* something like. And the priests—'

She smiled again, little meditative smiles, as though she were recalling her experiences.

'Well, I don't know that there's much about them,' she said at last; 'they're queer, and they're awfully clever, and they want to manage you, of course.'

She stopped, quite unable to express herself any more fully. But it was evident that the traditional relation of the Catholic priest to his penitent had been to her a subject of curiosity and excitement—that she would gladly know more of it.

David could hardly believe his ears. He sat lost at first in the pure surprise of it, in the sense of Louie's unlikeness to any other human creature he had ever seen. Then a gleam of satisfaction arose. He had heard of the hold on women possessed by the Catholic Church, and maintained by her marvellous, and on the whole admirable, system of direction. For himself, he would have no priests of whatever Church. But his mind harboured none of the common Protestant rules and shibboleths. In God's name, let the priests get hold of this sister of his!—if they could—when he—

'Marry this man, then!' he said to her at last, breaking the silence abruptly, 'and square it with the Church, if you want to.'

'Oh, indeed!' she said mockingly. 'So you have nothing to say against my turning Catholic? I should like to see Uncle Reuben's face.'

Her voice had the exultant mischief of a child. It was evident that her spirits were rising, that her mood towards her brother was becoming more amiable.

'Nothing,' he said dryly, replying to her question.

Then he got up and looked for his hat. She watched him askance. 'What are you going for? I could get you some tea. *He* won't be in for hours.'

'I have said what I had to say. These'—taking a paper from his pocket and laying it down, 'are all the directions, legal and other, that concern you, as to the marriage. I drew them up this morning, with Mr. O'Kelly. I have given you his address. You can communicate with him at any time.'

'I can write to you, I suppose?'

'Better write to him,' he said quietly, 'he has instructions. He seemed to me a good sort.'

'Where are you going?'

'Back to Paris, and then—home.'

She placed herself in his way, so that the sunny light of the late afternoon, coming mostly from behind her, left her face in shadow.

'What'll you do without that money?' she asked abruptly.

He paused, getting together his answer with difficulty.

'I have the stock, and there is something left of the sixty pounds Uncle Reuben brought. I shall do.'

'He'll muddle it all,' she said roughly. 'What's the good?'

And she folded her arms across her with the recklessness of one quite ready and eager, if need be, to fight her own battle, with her own weapons, in her own way.

'Get Mr. O'Kelly to keep it, if you can persuade him, and draw it by degrees. I'd have made a trust of it, if it had been enough; but it isn't. Twenty-four pounds a year: that's all you'd get, if we tied up the capital.'

She laughed. Evidently her acquaintance with Montjoie had enlarged her notions of money, which were precise and acute enough before.

'He spends that in a supper when he's in cash. I'll be curious to see whether, all in a lump, it'll be enough to make him marry me. Still, he is precious hard up: he don't stir out till dark, he's so afraid of meeting people.'

'That's my hope,' said David heavily, hardly knowing what he said. 'Good-bye.'

'Hope!' she re-echoed bitterly. 'What d'you want to tie me to him for, for good and all?'

And, turning away from him, she stared, frowning, through the dingy glass door into the darkening garden. In her mind there was once more that strange uprising swell of reaction—of hatred of herself and life.

Why, indeed? David could not have answered her question. He only knew that there was a blind instinct in him driving him to this, as the best that remained open—the only *amende* possible for what had been so vilely done by himself, by her, and by the man who had worked out her fall for a mere vicious whim. There was no word in any mouth, it seemed to him, of his being in love with her.

There were all sorts of whirling thoughts in his mind—fragments cast up by the waves of desolate experience he had been passing through—inarticulate cries of warning, judgment, pain. But he could put nothing into words.

'Good-bye, Louie!'

She turned and stood looking at him.

'What made you get ill?' she inquired, eyeing him.

His thirsty heart drank in the change of tone.

'I don't sleep,' he said hurriedly. 'It's the noise. The Nord station is never quiet. Well, mind you've got to bring that off. Keep the papers safe. Good-bye, for a long time.'

'I can come over when I want?' she said half sullenly.

'Yes,' he assented, 'but you won't want.'

He drew her by the hand, with a solemn tremulous feeling, and kissed her on the cheek. He would have liked to give her their father's dying letter. It was there, in his coat-pocket. But

he shrank from the emotion of it. No, he must go. He had done all he could.

She opened the door for him, and took him to the garden-gate in silence.

'When I'm married,' she said shortly, 'if ever I am—Lord knows!—you can tell Uncle Reuben and Dora?'

'Yes. Good-bye.'

The gate closed behind him. He went away, hurrying towards the Auteuil station.

When he landed again in the Paris streets, he stood irresolute.

'One more look,' he said to himself, 'one more.'

And he turned down the Rue Chantal. There was the familiar archway, and the light shining behind the porter's door. Was her room already stripped and bare, or was the broken glass—poor dumb prophet!—still there, against the wall?

He wandered on through the lamp-lit city and the crowded pavements. Elise—the wraith of her—went with him, hand in hand, ghost with ghost, amid this multitude of men. Sometimes, breaking from this dream-companionship, he would wake with terror to the perception of his true, his utter loneliness. He was not made to be alone, and the thought that nowhere in this great Paris was there a single human being to whose friendly eye or hand he might turn him in his need, swept across him from time to time, contracting the heart. Dora—Mr. Ancrum—if they knew, they would be sorry.

Then again indifference and blankness came upon him, and he could only move feebly on, seeing everything in a blur and mist. After these long days and nights of sleeplessness, semi-starvation, and terrible excitement, every nerve was sick, every organ out of gear.

The lights of the Tuileries, the stately pile of the Louvre, under a grey driving sky.—There would be rain soon—ah, there it came! the great drops hissing along the pavement. He pushed on to the river, careless of the storm, soothed, indeed, by the cool dashes of rain in his face and eyes.

The Place de la Concorde seemed to him as day, so brilliant was the glare of its lamps. To the right, the fairyland of the Champs-Elysées, the trees tossing under the sudden blast; in front, the black trench of the river. On, on—let him see it all—gather it all into his accusing heart and brain, and then at a stroke blot out the inward and the outward vision, and 'cease upon the midnight with no pain'!

He walked till he could walk no more; then he sank on a dark seat on the Quai Saint-Michel, cursing himself. Had he no nerve left for the last act—was that what this delay, this fooling meant? Coward!

But not here! not in these streets—this publicity! Back—to the little noisome room. There lock the door, and make an end!

On the way northward, at the command of a sudden caprice, he sat down outside a blazing café on the Boulevard and ordered

absinthe, which he had never tasted. While he waited he looked round on the painted women, on the men escorting them, on the loungers with their newspapers and cigars, the shouting, supercilious waiters. But all the little odious details of the scene escaped him; he felt only the touchingness of his human comradeship, the yearning of a common life, bruised and wounded but still alive within him.

Then he drank the stuff they gave him, loathed it, paid and staggered on. When he reached his hotel he crept upstairs, dreading to meet any of the harsh-faced people who frowned as he passed them. He had done abject things these last three days to conciliate them—tipped the waiter, ordered food, not that he might eat it but that he might pay for it, bowed to the landlady —all to save the shrinking of his sore and quivering nerves. In vain! It seemed to him that since that last look from Elise as she nestled into the fern, there had been no kindness for him in human eyes—save, perhaps, from that woman with the child.

As he dragged himself up to his fourth floor, the stimulant he had taken began to work upon his starved senses. The key was in his door, he turned it and fell into his room, while the door, with the key still in it, swung to behind him. Guiding himself by the furniture, he reached the only chair the room possessed—an arm-chair of the commonest and cheapest hotel sort, which, because of the uncertainty of its legs, the *femme de chambre* had propped up against the bed. He sat down in it and his head fell back on the counterpane. There was much to do. He had to write to John about the sale of his stock and the payment of his debts. He had to put his father's letter into an envelope for Louie, to send all the papers and letters he had on him and a last message to Mr. Ancrum, and then to post these letters, so that nothing private might fall into the hands of the French police, who would, of course, open his bag.

While these thoughts were rising in him, a cloud came over the brain, bringing with it, as it seemed, the first moment of ease which had been his during this awful fortnight. Before he yielded himself to it he thrust his hand into his coat-pocket with a sudden vague anxiety to feel what was there. But even as he withdrew his fingers they relaxed; a black object came with them, and fell unheeded, first on his knee, then on to a coat lying on the floor between him and the window.

A quarter of an hour afterwards there was a stir and voices on the landing outside. Some one knocked at the door of No. 139. No answer. 'The key is in the door. *Ouvrez donc!*' cried the waiter, as he ran downstairs again to the restaurant, which was still crowded. The visitor opened the door and peeped in. Some quick words broke from him. He rushed in and up to the bed. But directly the heavy feverish breathing of the figure in the chair caught his ear his look of sudden horror relaxed, and he fell back, looking at the sleeping youth.

It was a piteous sight he saw! Exhaustion, helplessness,

sorrow, physical injury, and moral defeat, were written in every line of the poor drawn face and shrunken form. The brow was furrowed, the breathing hard, the mouth dry and bloodless. Upon the mind of the new-comer, possessed as it was with the image of what David Grieve had been two short months before, the effect of the spectacle was presently overwhelming.

He fell on his knees beside the sleeper. But as he did so, he noticed the black thing on the floor, stooped to it, and took it up. That it should be a loaded revolver seemed to him at that moment the most natural thing in the world, little used as he personally was to such possessions. He looked at it carefully, took out the two cartridges it contained, put them into one pocket and the revolver into the other.

Then he laid his arm round the lad's neck.

'David!'

The young man woke directly and sat up, shaking with terror and excitement. He pushed his visitor from him, looking at him with defiance. Then he slipped his hand inside his coat and sprang up with a cry.

'David!—dear boy—dear fellow!'

The voice penetrated the lad's ear. He caught his visitor and dragged him forward to the light. It fell on the twisted face and wet eyes of Mr. Ancrum. So startling was the vision, so poignant were the associations which it set vibrating, that David stood staring and trembling, struck dumb.

'Oh, my poor lad! my poor lad! John wanted me to come yesterday, and I delayed. I was a selfish wretch. Now I will take you home.'

David fell again upon his chair, too feeble to speak, too feeble even to weep, the little remaining colour ebbing from his cheeks. The minister used all his strength, and laid him on the bed. Then he rang and made even the callous and haughty madame, who was presently summoned, listen to and obey him while he sent for brandy and a doctor, and let the air of the night into the stifling room.

CHAPTER XII

In two or three days the English doctor who was attending David strongly advised Mr. Ancrum to get his charge home. The fierce strain his youth had sustained acting through the nervous system had disordered almost every bodily function, and the collapse which followed Mr. Ancrum's appearance was severe. He would lie in his bed motionless and speechless, volunteered no confidence, and showed hardly any rallying power.

'Get him out of this furnace and that doghole of a room,' said the doctor. 'He has come to grief here somehow—that's plain. You won't make anything of him till you move him.'

When the lad was at last stretched on the deck of a Channel steamer speeding to the English coast, and the sea breeze had

brought a faint touch of returning colour to his cheek, he asked the question he had never yet had the physical energy to ask.

'Why did you come, and how did you find me?'

Then it appeared that the old cashier at Heywood's bank, who had taken a friendly interest in the young bookseller since the opening of his account, had dropped a private word to John in the course of conversation, which had alarmed that youth not a little. His own last scrawl from David had puzzled and disquieted him, and he straightway marched off to Mr. Ancrum to consult. Whereupon the minister wrote cautiously and affectionately to David asking for some prompt and full explanation of things for his friends' sake. The letter was, as we know, never opened, and therefore never answered. Whereupon John's jealous misery on Louie's account and Mr. Ancrum's love for David had so worked that the minister had broken in upon his scanty savings and started for Paris at a few hours' notice. Once in the Rue Chantal he had come easily on David's track.

Naturally he had inquired after Louie as soon as David was in a condition to be questioned at all. The young man hesitated a moment, then he said resolutely, 'She is married,' and would say no more. Mr. Ancrum pressed the matter a little, but his patient merely shook his head, and the sight of him as he lay there on the pillow was soon enough to silence the minister.

On the evening before they left Paris he called for a telegraph form, wrote a message and paid the reply, but Mr. Ancrum saw nothing of either. When the reply arrived David crushed it in his hand with a strange look, half bitterness, half relief, and flung it behind a piece of furniture standing near.

Now, on the cool, wind-swept deck, he seemed more inclined to talk than he had been yet. He asked questions about John and the Lomaxes—he even inquired after Lucy, as to whom the minister who had lately improved an acquaintance with Dora and her father, begun through David, could only answer vaguely that he believed she was still in the south. But he volunteered nothing about his own affairs or the cause of the state in which Mr. Ancrum had found him.

Every now and then, indeed, as they stood together at the side of the vessel, David leaning heavily against it, his words would fail him altogether, and he would be left staring stupidly, the great black eyes widening, the lower lip falling—over the shifting brilliance of the sea.

Ancrum was almost sure too that in the darkness of their last night in Paris there had been, hour after hour, a sound of hard and stifled weeping, mingled with the noises from the street and from the station; and to-day the youth in the face was more quenched than ever, in spite of the signs of reviving health. There had been a woman in the case, of course: Louie might have misbehaved herself; but after all the world is so made that no sister can make a brother suffer as David had evidently suffered—and then there was the revolver! About this

last, after one or two restless movements of search, which Mr. Ancrum interpreted, David had never asked, and the minister, timid man of peace that he was, had resold it before leaving.

Well, it was a problem, and it must be left to time. Meanwhile Mr. Ancrum was certainly astonished that *any* love affair should have had such a destructive volcanic power with the lad. For it was no mere raw and sensuous nature, no idle and morbid brain. One would have thought that so many different aptitudes and capacities would have kept each other in check.

As they neared Manchester, David grew plainly restless and ill at ease. He looked out sharply for the name of each succeeding town, half turning afterwards, as though to speak to his companion; but it was not till they were within ten minutes of the Central Station that he said—

'John will want to know about Louie. She is married,—as I told you,—to a French sculptor. I have handed over to her all my father's money—that is why I drew it out.'

Mr. Ancrum edged up closer to him—all ears—waiting for more. But there was nothing more.

'And you are satisfied?' he said at last.

David nodded and looked out of window intently.

'What is the man's name?'

David either did not or would not hear, and Mr. Ancrum let him alone. But the news was startling. So the boy had stripped himself, and must begin the world again as before! What had that minx been after?

Manchester again. David looked out eagerly from the cab, his hand trembling on his knee, beads of perspiration on his face.

They turned up the narrow street, and there in the distance to the right was the stall and the shop, and a figure on the steps. Mr. Ancrum had sent a card before them, and John was on the watch.

The instant the cab stopped, and before the driver could dismount, John had opened the door. Putting his head in he peered at the pair inside, and at the opposite seat, with his small short-sighted eyes.

'Where is she?' he said hoarsely, barring the way.

Mr. Ancrum looked at his companion. David had shrunk back into the corner, with a white hangdog look, and said nothing. The minister interposed.

'David will tell you all,' he said gently. 'First help me in with him, and the bags. He is a sick man.'

With a huge effort John controlled himself, and they got inside. Then he shut the shop door and put his back against it.

'Tell me where she is,' he repeated shortly.

'She is married,' David said in a low voice, but looking up from the chair on which he had sunk. 'By now—she is married. I heard by telegram last night that all was arranged for to-day.'

The lad opposite made a sharp, inarticulate sound which

startled the minister's ear. Then clutching the handle of the door, he resumed sharply—

'Who has she married?'

The assumption of the right to question was arrogance itself—strange in the dumb, retiring creature whom the minister had hitherto known only as David's slave and shadow!

'A French sculptor,' said David steadily, but propping his head and hand against the counter, so as to avoid John's stare—'a man called Montjoie. I was a brute—I neglected her. She got into his hands. Then I sent for all my money to bribe him to marry her. And he has.'

'You—you *blackguard!*' cried John.

David straightened instinctively under the blow, and his eyes met John's for one fierce moment. Then Mr. Ancrum thought he would have fainted. The minister took rough hold of John by the shoulders.

'If you can't stay and hold your tongue,' he said, 'you must go. He is worn out with the journey, and I shall get him to bed. Here's some money: suppose you run to the house round the corner, in Prince's Street; ask if they've got some strong soup, and, if they have, hurry back with it. Come—look sharp. And—one moment—you've been sleeping here, I suppose? Well, I shall take your room for a bit, if that'll suit you. This fellow'll have to be looked after.'

The little lame creature spoke like one who meant to have his way. John took the coin, hesitated, and stumbled out.

For days afterwards there was silence between him and David, except for business directions. He avoided being in the shop with his employer, and would stand for hours on the step, ostensibly watching the stall, but in reality doing no business that he could help. Whenever Mr. Ancrum caught sight of him he was leaning against the wall, his hat slouched over his eyes, his hands in his pockets, utterly inert and listless, more like a log than a human being. Still he was no less stout, lumpish, and pink-faced than before. His fate might have all the tragic quality; nature had none the less inexorably endowed him with the externals of farce.

Meanwhile David dragged himself from his bed to the shop and set to work to pick up dropped threads. The customers, who had been formerly interested in him, discovered his return, and came in to inquire why he had been so long away, or, in the case of one or two, whether he had executed certain commissions in Paris. The explanation of illness, however, circulated from the first moment by Mr. Ancrum, and perforce adopted—though with an inward rage and rebellion—by David himself, was amply sufficient to cover his omissions and inattentions, and to ease his resumption of his old place. His appearance indeed was still ghastly. The skin of the face had the tightened, transparent look of weakness; the eyes, reddened and sunk, showed but little of their old splendour between the blue circles beneath and

the heavy brows above; even the hair seemed to have lost its boyish curl, and fell in harsh, troublesome waves over the forehead, whence its owner was perpetually and impatiently thrusting it back. All the bony structure of the face had been emphasised at the expense of its young grace and bloom, and the new indications of moustache and beard did but add to its striking and painful black and white. And the whole impression of change was completed by the melancholy aloofness, the shrinking distrust with which eyes ouce overflowing with the frankness and eagerness of one of the most accessible of human souls now looked out upon the world.

'Was it fever?' said a young Owens College professor who had taken a lively interest from the beginning in the clever lad's venture. 'Upon my word! you do look pulled down. Paris may be the first city in the world—it is an insanitary hole all the same. So you never found time to inquire after those Molière editions for me?'

David racked his brains. What was it he had been asked to do? He remembered half an hour's talk on one of those early days with a bookseller on the Quai Voltaire—was it about this commission? He could not recall.

'No, sir,' he said, stammering and flushing. 'I believe I did ask somewhere, but I can't remember.'

'It's very natural, very natural,' said the professor kindly. 'Never mind. I'll send you the particulars again, and you can keep your eyes open for me. And, look here, take your business easy for a while. You'll get on—you're sure to get on—if you only recover your health.'

David opened the door for him in silence.

The reawakening of his old life in him was strange and slow. When he first found himself back among his books and catalogues, his ledgers and business memoranda, he was bewildered and impatient. What did these elaborate notes, with their cabalistic signs and abbreviations—whether as to the needs of customers, or the whereabouts of books, or the history of prices—mean or matter? He was like a man who has lost a sense. Then the pressure of certain debts which should have been met out of the money in the bank first put some life into him. He looked into his financial situation and found it grave, though not desperate. All hope of a large and easy expansion of business was, of course, gone. The loss of his capital had reduced him to the daily shifts and small laborious accumulations with which he had begun. But this factor in his state was morally of more profit to him at the moment than any other. With such homely medicines nature and life can often do most for us.

Such was Ancrum's belief, and in consequence he showed a very remarkable wisdom during these early days of David's return.

'As far as I can judge, there has been a bad shake to the heart in more senses than one,' had been the dry remark of the

Paris doctor; 'and as for nervous system, it's a mercy he's got any left. Take care of him, but for Heaven's sake don't make an invalid of him—that would be the finish.'

So that Ancrum offered no fussy opposition to the resumption of the young man's daily work, though at first it produced a constant battle with exhaustion and depression. But never day or night did the minister forget his charge. He saw that he ate and drank; he enforced a few common-sense remedies for the nervous ills which the moral convulsion had left behind it, ills which the lad in his irritable humiliation would fain have hidden even from him; above all he knew how to say a word which kept Dora and Daddy and other friends away for a time, and how to stand between David and that choked and miserable John.

He had the strength of mind also to press for no confidence and to expect no thanks. He had little fear of any further attempts at suicide, though he would have found it difficult perhaps to explain why. But instinctively he felt that for all practical purposes David had been mad when he found him, and that he was mad no longer. He was wretched, and only a fraction of his mind was in Manchester and in his business—that was plain. But, in however imperfect a way, he was again master of himself; and the minister bided his time, putting his ultimate trust in one of the finest mental and physical constitutions he had ever known.

In about ten days David took up his hat one afternoon and, for the first time, ventured into the streets. On his return he was walking down Potter Street in a storm of wind and rain, when he ran against some one who was holding an umbrella right in front of her and battling with the weather. In his recoil he saw that it was Dora.

Dora too looked up, a sudden radiant pleasure in her face overflowing her soft eyes and lips.

'Oh, Mr. Grieve! And are you really better?'

'Yes,' he said briefly. 'May I walk with you a bit?'

'Oh no!—I don't believe you ought to be out in such weather. I'll just come the length of the street with you.'

And she turned and walked with him, chattering fast, and of course, from the point of view of an omniscience which could not have been hers, foolishly. Had he liked Paris?—what he saw of it at least before he had been ill?—and how long had he been ill? Why had he not let Mr. Ancrum or some one know sooner? And would he tell her more about Louie? She heard that she was married, but there was so much she, Dora, wanted to hear.

To his first scanty answers she paid in truth but small heed, for the joy of seeing him again was soon effaced by the painful impression of his altered aspect. The more she looked at him, the more her heart went out to him; her whole being became an effusion of pity and tenderness, and her simplest words, maidenly and self-restrained as she was, were in fact charged with something electric, ineffable. His suffering, his neighbourhood, her

own sympathy—she was taken up, overwhelmed by these general impressions. Inferences, details escaped her.

But as she touched on the matter of Louie, and they were now at his own steps, he said to her hurriedly—

'Walk a little further, and I'll tell you. John's in there.'

She opened her eyes, not understanding, and then demurred a little on the ground of his health and the rain.

'Oh, I'm all right,' he said impatiently. 'Look here, will you walk to Chetham's Library? There'll be a quiet place there, in the reading room—sure to be—where we can talk.'

She assented, and very soon they were mounting the black oak stairs leading to this old corner of Manchester. At the top of the stairs they saw in the distance, at the end of the passage on to which open the readers' studies, each with its lining of folios and its oaken lattice, a librarian, who nodded to David, and took a look at Dora. Further on they stumbled over a small boy from the charity school who wished to lionise them over the whole building. But when he had been routed, they found the beautiful panelled and painted reading-room quite empty, and took possession of it in peace. David led the way to an oriel window he had become familiar with in the off-times of his first years at Manchester, and they seated themselves there with a low sloping desk between them, looking out on the wide rain-swept yard outside, the buildings of the grammar-school, and the black mass of the cathedral.

Manchester had never been more truly Manchester than on this dark July afternoon, with its low shapeless clouds, its darkness, wind, and pelting rain. David, staring out through the lozenge panes at the familiar gloom beyond, was suddenly carried by repulsion into the midst of a vision which was an agony—of a spring forest cut by threadlike paths; of a shadeless sun; of a white city steeped in charm, in gaiety.

Dora watched him timidly, new perceptions and alarms dawning in her.

'You were going to tell me about Louie,' she said.

He returned to himself, and abruptly turned with his back to the window, so that he saw the outer world no more.

'You heard that she was married?'

'Yes.'

'She has married a brute. It was partly my fault. I wanted to be rid of her; she got in my way. This man was in the same house; I left her to herself, and partly, I believe, to spite me, she went off with him. Then at the last when she wouldn't leave him I made her marry him. I bribed him to marry her. And he did. I had just enough money to make it worth his while. But he will ill-treat her; and she won't stay with him. She will go from bad to worse.'

Dora drew back, with her hand on the desk, staring at him with incredulous horror.

'But you were ill?' she stammered.

He shook his head.

'Never mind my being ill. I wanted you to know, because you were good to her, and I'm not going to be a hypocrite to you. Nobody else need know anything but that she's married, which is true. If I'd looked after her it mightn't have happened —perhaps. But I didn't look after her—I couldn't.'

His face, propped in his hands, was hidden from her. She was in a whirl of excitement and tragic impression—understanding something, divining more.

'Louie was always so self-willed,' she said trembling.

'Aye. That don't make it any better. You remember all I told you about her before? You know we didn't get on; she wasn't nice to me, and I didn't suit her, I suppose. But all this year, I don't know why, she's been on my mind from morning till night; I've always felt sure, somehow, that she would come to harm; and the worrying oneself about her—well! it has seemed *to grow into one's very bones.*'—He threw out the last words after a pause, in which he had seemed to search for some phrase wherewith to fit the energy of his feeling. 'I took her to Paris to keep her out of mischief. I had much rather have gone alone; but she would not ask you to take her in, and I couldn't leave her with John. Well, then, she got in my way—I told you—and I let her go to the dogs. There—it's done—*done!*'

He turned on his seat, one hand drumming the desk, while his eyes fixed themselves apparently on the portrait of Sir Humphry Chetham over the carved mantelpiece. His manner was hard and rapid; neither voice nor expression had any of the simplicity or directness of remorse.

Dora remained silent looking at him; her slender hands were pressed tight against either cheek; the tears rose slowly till they filled her grey eyes.

'It is very sad,' she said in a low voice.

There was a pause.

'Yes—it's sad. So are most things in this world, perhaps. All natural wants seem just to lead us to misery sooner or later. And who gave them to us—who put us here—with no choice but just to go on blundering from one muddle into another?'

Their eyes met. It was as though he had remembered her religion, and could not, in his bitterness, refrain from an indirect fling at it.

As for her, what he said was strange and repellent to her. But her forlorn passion, so long trampled on, cried within her; her pure heart was one prayer, one exquisite throb of pain and pity.

'Did some one deceive you?' she asked, so low that the words seemed just breathed into the air.

'No,—I deceived myself.'

Then as he looked at her an impulse of confession crossed his mind. Sympathy, sincerity, womanly sweetness, these things he had always associated with Dora Lomax. Instinctively he had

chosen her for a friend long ago as soon as their first foolish spars were over.

But the impulse passed away. He thought of her severity, her religion, her middle-class canons and judgments, which perhaps were all the stricter because of Daddy's laxities. What common ground between her and his passion, between her and Elise? No! if he must speak—if, in the end, he proved too weak to forbear wholly from speech—let it be to ears more practised, and more human!

So he choked back his words, and Dora felt instinctively that he would tell her no more. Her consciousness of this was a mingled humiliation and relief; it wounded her to feel that she had so little command of him; yet she dreaded what he might say. Paris was a wicked place—so the world reported. Her imagination, sensitive, Christianised, ascetic, shrank from what he might have done. Perhaps the woman shrank too. Instead, she threw herself upon the thought, the bliss, that he was there again beside her, restored, rescued from the gulf, if gulf there had been.

He went back to the subject of Louie, and told her as much as a girl of Dora's kind could be told of what he himself knew of Louie's husband. In the course of his two days' search for them, which had included an interview with Madame Cervin, he had become tolerably well acquainted with Montjoie's public character and career. Incidentally parts of the story of Louie's behaviour came in, and for one who knew her as Dora did, her madness and wilfulness emerged, could be guessed at, little as the brother intended to excuse himself thereby. How, indeed, should he excuse himself? Louie's character was a fixed quantity to be reckoned on by all who had dealings with her. One might as well excuse oneself for letting a lunatic escape by the pretext of his lunacy. Dora perfectly understood his tone. Yet in her heart of hearts she forgave him—for she knew not what!—became his champion. There was a dry sharpness of self-judgment, a settled conviction of coming ill in all he said which wrung her heart. And how blanched he was by that unknown misery! How should she not pity, not forgive? It was the impotence of her own feeling to express itself that swelled her throat. And poor Lucy, too—ah! poor Lucy.

Suddenly, as he was speaking, he noticed his companion more closely, the shabbiness of the little black hat and jacket, the new lines round the eyes and mouth.

'*You* have not been well,' he said abruptly. 'How has your father been going on?'

She started and tried to answer quietly. But her nerves had been shaken by their talk, and by that inward play of emotion which had gone on out of his sight. Quite unexpectedly she broke down, and covering her eyes with one hand, began to sob gently.

'I can't do anything with him now, poor father,' she said, when she could control herself. 'He won't listen to me at all.

The debts are beginning to be dreadful, and the business is going down fast. I don't know what we shall do. And it all makes him worse—drives him to drink.'

David thought a minute, lifted out of himself for the first time.

'Shall I come to-night to see him?'

'Oh do!' she said eagerly; 'come about nine o'clock. I will tell him—perhaps that will keep him in.'

Then she went into more details than she had yet done; named the creditors who were pressing; told how her church-work, though she worked herself blind night and day, could do but little for them; how both the restaurant and the reading-room were emptying, and she could now get no servants to stay, but Sarah, because of her father's temper.

It seemed to him as he listened that the story, with its sickened hope and on-coming fate, was all in some strange way familiar; it or something like it was to have been expected; for him the strange and jarring thing now would have been to find a happy person. He was in that young morbid state when the mind hangs its own cloud over the universe.

But Dora got up to go, tying on her veil with shaking hands. She was so humbly grateful to him that he was sorry for her—that he could spare a thought from his own griefs for her.

As they went down the dark stairs together, he asked after Lucy. She was now staying with some relations at Wakely, a cotton town in the valley of the Irwell, Dora said; but she would probably go back to Hastings for the winter. It was now settled that she and her father could not get on; and the stepmother that was to be—Purcell, however, was taking his time—was determined not to be bothered with her.

David listened with a certain discomfort. 'It was what she did for me,' he thought, 'that set him against her for good and all. Old brute!'

Aloud he said: 'I wrote to her, you know, and sent her that book. She *did* write me a queer letter back—it was all dashes and splashes—about the street-preachings on the beach, and a blind man who sang hymns. I can't remember why she hated him so particularly!'

She answered his faint smile. Lucy was a child for both of them. Then he took her to the door of the Parlour, noticing, as he parted from her, how dingy and neglected the place looked.

Afterwards—directly he had left her—the weight of his pain which had been lightened for an hour descended upon him again, shutting the doors of the senses, leaving him alone within, face to face with the little figure which haunted him day and night. During the days since his return from Paris the faculty of projective imagination, which had endowed his childhood with a second world, and peopled it with the incidents and creatures of his books, had grown to an abnormal strength. Behind the stage on which he was now painfully gathering together the fragments of his old life, it created for him another, where, amid scenes

richly set and lit with perpetual summer, he lived with Elise, walked with her, watched her, lay at her feet, quarrelled with her, forgave her. His drama did not depend on memory alone, or rather it was memory passing into creation. Within its bounds he was himself and not himself; his part was loftier than any he had ever played in reality; his eloquence was no longer tongue-tied—it flowed and penetrated. His love might be cruel, but he was on her level, nay, her master; he could reproach, wrestle with, command her; and at the end evoke the pardoning flight into each other's arms—confession—rapture.

Till suddenly, poor fool! a little bolt shot from the bow of memory—the image of a *diligence* rattling along a white road—or of black rain-beaten quays, with their lines of wavering lamps—or of a hideous upper room with blue rep furniture where one could neither move nor breathe—would strike his dream to fragments, and as it fell to ruins within him, his whole being would become one tumult of inarticulate cries—delirium—anguish—with which the self at the heart of all seemed to be wrestling for life.

It was so to-day after he left Dora. First the vision, the enchantment—then the agony, the sob of desolation which could hardly be kept down. He saw nothing in the streets. He walked on past the Exchange, where an unusual crowd was gathered, elbowing his way through it mechanically, but not in truth knowing that it was there.

When he reached the shop he ran past John, who was reading a newspaper, up to his room and locked the door.

About an hour afterwards Mr. Ancrum came in, all excitement, a batch of papers under his arm.

'It is going to be war, John! *War*—I tell you! and such a war. They'll be beaten, those braggarts, if there's justice in heaven. The streets are all full; I could hardly get here; everybody talking of how it will affect Manchester. Time enough to think about that! What a set of selfish beasts we all are! Where's David?'

'Come in an hour ago!' said John sullenly; 'he went upstairs.'

'Ah, he will have heard—the placards are all over the place.'

The minister went upstairs and knocked at David's door.

'David!'

'All right,' said a voice from inside.

'David, what do you think of the news?'

'What news?' after a pause.

'Why, the war, man! Haven't you seen the evening paper?'

No answer. The minister stood listening at the door. Then a tender look dawned in his odd grey face.

'David, look here, I'll push you the paper under the door. You're tired, I suppose—done yourself up with your walk?'

'I'll be down to supper,' said the voice from inside, shortly. 'Will you push in the paper?'

The minister descended, and sat by himself in the kitchen thinking. He was a wiser man now than when he had gone out, and not only as to that reply of the King of Prussia to the French ultimatum on the subject of the Hohenzollern candidature.

For he had met Barbier in the street. How to keep the voluble Frenchman from bombarding David in his shattered state had been one of Mr. Ancrum's most anxious occupations since his return. It had been done, but it had been difficult. For to whom did David owe his first reports of Paris if not to the old comrade who had sent him there, found him a lodging, and taught him to speak French so as not to disgrace himself and his country? However, Ancrum had found means to intercept Barbier's first visit, and had checkmated his attempts ever since. As a natural result, Barbier was extremely irritable. Illness—stuff! The lad had been getting into scrapes—that he would swear.

On this occasion, when Ancrum stumbled across him, he found Barbier, at first bubbling over with the war news; torn different ways; now abusing the Emperor for a *cochon* and a *fou*, prophesying unlimited disaster for France, and sneering at the ranting crowds on the boulevards; the next moment spouting the same anti-Prussian madness with which his whole unfortunate country was at the moment infected. In the midst of his gallop of talk, however, the old man suddenly stopped, took off his hat, and running one excited hand through his bristling tufts of grey hair pointed to Ancrum with the other.

'*Halte là!*' he said, 'I know what your young rascal has been after. I know, and I'll be bound you don't. Trust a lover for hoodwinking a priest. Come along here.'

And putting his arm through Ancrum's, he swept him away, repeating, as they walked, the substance of a letter from his precious nephew, in which the Barbizon episode as it appeared to the inhabitants of No. 7 Rue Chantal and to the students of Taranne's *atelier de femmes* was related, with every embellishment of witticism and *blague* that the imagination of a French *rapin* could suggest. Mademoiselle Delaunay was not yet restored, according to the writer, to the *atelier* which she adorned. '*On criait au scandale*,' mainly because she was such a clever little animal, and the others envied and hated her. She had removed to a studio near the Luxembourg, and Taranne was said to be teaching her privately. Meanwhile Dubois requested his dear uncle to supply him with information as to *l'autre;* it would be gratefully received by an appreciative circle. As for *la sœur de l'autre*, the dear uncle no doubt knew that she had migrated to the studio of Monsieur Montjoie, an artist whose little affairs in the *genre* had already, before her advent, attained a high degree of interest and variety. On a review of all the circumstances, the dear uncle would perhaps pardon the writer if he were less disposed than before to accept those estimable

views of the superiority of the English *morale* to the French, which had been so ably impressed upon him during his visit to Manchester.

For after a very short stay at Brussels the nephew had boldly and suddenly pushed over to England, and had spent a fortnight in Barbier's lodgings reconnoitering his uncle. As to the uncle, Xavier had struck him, on closer inspection, as one of the most dissolute young reprobates he had ever beheld. He had preached to him like a father, holding up to him the image of his own absent favourite, David Grieve, as a brilliant illustration of what could be achieved even in this wicked world by morals and capacity. And in the intervals he had supplied the creature with money and amused himself with his *gaminerie* from morning till night. On their parting the uncle had with great frankness confessed to the nephew the general opinion he had formed of his character; all the same they were now embarked on a tolerably frequent correspondence; and Dubois' ultimate chance of obtaining his uncle's savings, on the *chasse* of which he had come to England, would have seemed to the cool observer by no means small.

'But now, look here,' said Barbier, taking off his spectacles to wipe away the 'merry tear' which dimmed them, after the recapitulation of Xavier's last letter, 'no more nonsense! I come and have it out with that young man. I sent him to Paris, and I'll know what he did there. *He's* not made of burnt sugar. Of course he's broken his heart—we all do. Serve him right.'

'It's easy to laugh,' said Ancrum dryly, 'only these young fellows have sometimes an uncomfortable way of vindicating their dignity by shooting themselves.'

Barbier started and looked interrogative.

'Now suppose you listen to me,' said the minister.

And the two men resumed their patrol of Albert Square while Ancrum described his rescue of David. The story was simply told but impressive. Barbier whistled, stared, and surrendered. Nay, he went to the other extreme. He loved the absurd, but he loved the romantic more. An hour before, David's adventures had been to him a subject of comic opera. As Ancrum talked, they took on 'the grand style,' and at the end he could no more have taken liberties with his old pupil than with the hero of the *Nuit de Mai*. He became excited, sympathetic, declamatory, tore open old sores, and Mr. Ancrum had great difficulty in getting rid of him.

So now the minister was sitting at home meditating. Through the atmosphere of mockery with which Dubois had invested the story he saw the outlines of it with some clearness.

CHAPTER XIII

In the midst of his meditations, however, the minister did not forget to send John out for David's supper, and when David

appeared, white, haggard, and exhausted, it was to find himself thought for with a care like a woman's. The lad, being sick and irritable, showed more resentment than gratitude ; pushed away his food, looking sombrely the while at the dry bread and tea which formed the minister's invariable evening meal as though to ask when he was to be allowed his rational freedom again to eat or fast as he pleased. He scarcely answered Ancrum's remarks about the war, and finally he got up heavily, saying he was going out.

'You ought to be in your bed,' said Ancrum, protesting almost for the first time, 'and it's there you will be—tied by the leg—if you don't take a decent care of yourself.'

David took no notice and went. He dragged himself to the German Athenæum, of which he had become a member in the first flush of his inheritance. There were the telegrams from Paris, and an eager crowd reading and discussing them. As he pushed his way in at last and read, the whole scene rose before him as though he were there—the summer boulevards with their trees and kiosks, the moving crowds, the shouts, the 'Marseillaise'—the blind infectious madness of it all. And one short fortnight ago, what man in Europe could have guessed that such a day was already on the knees of the gods ?

Afterwards, on the way to the Parlour, he talked to Elise about it,—placing her on the boulevards with the rest, and himself beside her to guard her from the throng. Hour by hour, this morbid gift of his, though it tortured him, provided an outlet for passion, saved him from numbness and despair.

When he got to Dora's sitting-room he found Daddy sitting there, smoking sombrely over the empty grate. He had expected a flood of questions, and had steeled himself to meet them. Nothing of the sort. The old man took very little notice of him and his travels. Considering the petulant advice with which Daddy had sent him off, David was astonished and, in the end, piqued. He recovered the tongue which he had lost for Ancrum, and was presently discussing the war like anybody else. Reminiscences of the talk amid which he had lived during those Paris weeks came back to them ; and he repeated some of them which bore on the present action of Napoleon III. and his ministry, with a touch of returning fluency. He was, in fact, playing for Daddy's attention.

Daddy watched him silently with a wild and furtive eye. At last, looking round to see whether Dora was there, and finding that she had gone out, he laid a lean long hand on David's knee.

'That'll do, Davy. Davy, why were you all that time away ?'

The young man drew himself up suddenly, brought back to realities from this first brief moment of something like forgetfulness. He tried for his common excuse of illness ; but it stuck in his throat.

'I can't tell you, Daddy,' he said at last, slowly. 'I might tell you lies, but I won't. It concerns myself alone.'

Daddy still bent forward, his peaked wizard's face peering at his companion.

'You've been in trouble, Davy?'

'Yes, Daddy. But if you ask me questions I shall go.'

He spoke with a sudden fierce resolution.

Daddy paid no attention. He threw himself back in his chair with a long breath.

'Bedad, and I knew it, Davy! But sorrow a bit o' pity will you get out o' me, my boy—sorrow a bit!'

He lay staring at his companion with a glittering hostile look.

'By the powers!' he said presently, 'to be a gossoon of twenty again and throubled about a woman!'

David sprang up.

'Well, Daddy, I'll bid you good night! I wanted to hear something about your own affairs, which don't seem to be flourishing. But I'll wait till Miss Dora's at home.'

'Sit down, sit down again!' cried Lomax angrily, catching him by the arm. 'I'll not meddle with you. Yes, we're in a bad way, a deuced bad way, if you listen to Dora. If it weren't for her I'd have walked myself off long ago and let the devil take the creditors.'

David sat down and tried to get at the truth. But Daddy turned restive, and now invited the traveller's talk he had before repelled. He fell into his own recollections of the Paris streets in '48, and his vanity enjoyed showing this slip of a fellow that old Lomax was well acquainted with France and French politics before he was born.

Presently Dora came in, saw that her father had been beguiled into foregoing his usual nocturnal amusements, and looked soft gratitude at David. But as for him, he had never realised so vividly the queer aloofness and slipperiness of Daddy's nature, nor the miserable insecurity of Dora's life. Such men were not meant to have women depending on them.

He went downstairs pondering what could be done for the old vagabond. Drink had indeed made ravages since he had seen him last. For Dora's sake the young man recalled with eagerness some statements and suggestions in a French treatise on 'L'Alcoolisme' he chanced to have been turning over among his foreign scientific stock. Dora, no doubt, had invoked the parson; he would endeavour to bring in the doctor. And there was a young one, a frequenter of the stall in Birmingham Street, not as yet overburdened with practice, who occurred to him as clever and likely to help.

Nor did he forget his purpose. The very next morning he got hold of the young man in question. Out came the French book, which contained the record of a famous Frenchman's experiments, and the two hung over it together in David's little back room,

till the doctor's views of booksellers and their probable minds were somewhat enlarged, and David felt something of the old intellectual glow which these scientific problems of mind and matter had awakened in him during the winter. Then he walked his physician off to Daddy during the dinner hour and boldly introduced him as a friend. The young doctor, having been forewarned, treated the situation admirably, took up a jaunty and jesting tone, and, finally, putting morals entirely aside, invited Daddy to consider himself as a scientific case, and deal with himself as such for the benefit of knowledge.

Daddy was feeling ill and depressed ; David struck him as an 'impudent varmint,' and the doctor as little better ; but the lad's solicitude nevertheless flattered the old featherbrain, and in the end he fell into a burst of grandiloquent and self-excusing confidence. The doctor played him ; prescribed ; and when he and David left together it really seemed as though the old man from sheer curiosity about and interest in his own symptoms would probably make an attempt to follow the advice given him.

Dora came in while the three were still joking and discussing. Her face clouded as she listened, and when David and the doctor left she gave them a cool and shrinking good-bye which puzzled David.

Daddy, however, after a little while, mended considerably, developed an enthusiasm for his self-appointed doctor, and, what was still better, a strong excitement about his own affairs. When it came to the stage of a loan for the meeting of the more pressing liabilities, of fresh and ingenious efforts to attract customers, and of a certain gleam of returning prosperity, David's concern for his old friend very much dropped again. His former vivid interest in the human scene and the actors in it, as such, was not yet recovered ; in these weeks weariness and lassitude overtook each reviving impulse and faculty in turn.

He was becoming more and more absorbed, too, by the news from France. Its first effect upon him was one of irritable repulsion. Barbier and Hugo had taught him to loathe the Empire ; and had not he and she read *Les Châtiments* together, and mocked the Emperor's carriage as it passed them in the streets? The French telegrams in the English papers, with their accounts of the vapouring populace, the wild rhetoric in the Chamber, and the general outburst of *fanfaronnade*, seemed to make the French nation one with the Empire in its worst aspects, and, as we can all remember, set English teeth on edge. David devoured the papers day by day, and his antagonism grew, partly because, in spite of that strong gravitation of his mind towards things expansive, emotional, and rhetorical, the essential paste of him was not French but English—but mostly because of other and stronger reasons of which he was hardly conscious. During that fortnight of his agony in Paris all that sympathetic bond between the great city and himself which had been the source of so much pleasure and excitement to him during his early days with Elise

had broken down. The glamour of happiness torn away, he had seen, beneath the Paris of his dream, a greedy brutal Paris from which his sick senses shrank in fear and loathing. The grace, the spell, was gone—he was alone and miserable!—and amid the gaiety, the materialism, the selfish vice of the place he had moved for days, an alien and an enemy, the love within him turning to hate.

So now his mortal pain revenged itself. They would be beaten—this depraved and enervated people!—and his feverish heart rejoiced. But Elise? His lips quivered. What did the war matter to her except so far as its inconveniences were concerned? What had *la patrie* any more than *l'amour* to do with art? He put the question to her in his wild evening walks. It angered him that as the weeks swept on, and the great thunderbolts began to fall—Wissembourg, Forbach, Wörth—his imagination would sometimes show her to him agitated and in tears. No pity for him! why this sorrow for France? Absurd! let her go paint while the world loved and fought. In '48, while monarchy and republic were wrestling it out in the streets of Paris, was not the landscape painter Chintreuil quietly sketching all the time just outside one of the gates of the city? There was the artist for you.

Meanwhile the growing excitement of the war, heightened and poisoned by this reaction of his personality, combined with his painful efforts to recover his business to make him for a time more pale and gaunt than ever. Ancrum remonstrated in vain. He would go his way.

One evening—it was the day after Wörth—he was striding blindly up the Oxford Road when he ran against a man at the corner of a side street. It was Barbier, coming out for the last news.

Barbier started, swore, caught him by the arm, then fell back in amazement.

'*C'est toi? bon Dieu!*'

David, who had hitherto avoided his old companion with the utmost ingenuity, began hurriedly to inquire whether he was going to look at the evening's telegram.

'Yes—no—what matter? You can tell me. David, my lad, Ancrum told me you had been ill, but—'

The old man slipped his arm through that of the youth and looked at him fixedly. His own face was all furrowed and drawn, the eyes red.

'*Oui; tu es changé*,' he said at last with a sudden quivering breath, almost a sob, 'like everything,—like the world!'

And hanging down his head he drew the lad on, down the little street, towards his lodging.

'Come in! I'll ask no questions. Oh, come in! I have the French papers; for three hours I have been reading them alone. Come in or I shall go mad!'

And they discussed the war, the political prospect, and Bar-

bier's French letters till nearly midnight. All the exile's nationality had revived, and so lost was he in weeping over France he had scarcely breath left wherewith to curse the Empire. In the presence of a grief so true, so poignant, wherein all the man's little tricks and absurdities had for the moment melted out of sight, David's own seared and bitter feeling could find no voice. He said not a word that could jar on his old friend. And Barbier, like a child, took his sympathy for granted and abused the 'heartless hypocritical' English press to him with a will.

The days rushed on. David read the English papers in town, then walked up late to Barbier's lodgings to read a French batch and talk. Gravelotte was over, the siege was approaching. In that strange inner life of his, David with Elise beside him looked on at the crashing trees in the Bois de Boulogne, at the long lines of carts laden with household stuff and fugitives from the *zone militaire* flocking into Paris, at the soldiers and horses camping in the Tuileries Gardens, at the distant smoke-clouds amid the woods of Issy and Meudon, as village after village flamed to ruins.

One night—it was a day or two after Sedan—in a corner of the *Constitutionnel*, he found a little paragraph :—

'M. Henri Regnault and M. Clairin, leaving their studio at Tangiers to the care of the French Consul, have returned to Paris to offer themselves for military service, from which, as holder of the *prix de Rome*, M. Regnault is legally exempt. To praise such an act would be to insult its authors. France—our bleeding France !—does but take stern note that her sons are faithful.'

David threw the paper down, made an excuse to Barbier, and went out. He could not talk to Barbier, to whom everything must be explained from the beginning, and his heart was full. He wandered out towards Fallowfield under a moon which gave beauty and magic even to these low, begrimed streets, these jarring, incongruous buildings, thinking of Regnault and that unforgotten night beside the Seine. The young artist's passage through the Louvre, the towering of his great head above the crowd in the 'Trois Rats,' and that outburst under the moonlight—everything, every tone, every detail, returned upon him.

'*The great France—the undying France—*'

And now for France—ah !—David divined the eagerness, the passion, with which it had been done. He was nearer to the artist than he had been two months before—nearer to all great and tragic things. His recognition of the fact had in it the start of a strange joy.

So moved was he, and in such complex ways, that as he thought of Regnault with that realising imagination which was his gift, the whole set of his feeling towards France and the war wavered and changed. The animosity, the drop of personal gall in his heart, disappeared, conjured by Regnault's look, by Regnault's act. The one heroic figure he had seen in France began

now to stand to him for the nation. He walked home doing penance in his heart, passionately renewing the old love, the old homage, in this awful presence of a stricken people at bay.

And Elise came to him, in the moonlight, leaning upon him, with soft, approving eyes—

Ah! where was she—where—in this whirlwind of the national fate? where was her frail life hidden? was she still in this Paris, so soon to be 'begirt with armies'?.

Four days later Barbier sent a note to Ancrum: 'Come and see me this afternoon at six o'clock. Say nothing to Grieve.'

A couple of hours afterwards Ancrum came slowly home to Birmingham Street, where he was still lodging. David had just put up the shop-shutters, John had departed, and his employer was about to retire to supper and his books in the back kitchen.

Ancrum went in and stood with his back to the fire which John had just made for the kettle and the minister's tea, when David came in with an armful of books and shut the door behind him. Ancrum let him put down his cargo, and then walked up to him.

'David,' he said, laying his hand with a timid gesture on the other's shoulder, 'Barbier has had some letters from Paris to-day—the last he will get probably—and among them a letter from his nephew.'

David started, turned sharp round, shaking off the hand.

'It contains some news which Barbier thinks you ought to know. Mademoiselle Elise Delaunay has married suddenly—married her cousin, Mr. Pimodan, a young doctor.'

The shock blanched every atom of colour from David's face. He tried wildly to control himself, to brave it out with a desperate 'Why not?' But speech failed him. He walked over to the mantelpiece and leant against it. The room swam with him, and the only impression of which for a moment or two he was conscious was that of the cheerful singing of the kettle.

'She would not leave Paris,' said Ancrum in a low voice, standing beside him. 'People tried to persuade her—nothing would induce her. Then this young man, who is said to have been in love with her for years, urged her to marry him—to accept his protection really, in view of all that might come. Dubois thinks she refused several times, but anyway two days ago they were married, civilly, with only the legal witnesses.'

David moved about the various things on the mantelpiece with restless fingers. Then he straightened himself.

'Is that all?' he asked, looking at the minister.

'All,' said Ancrum, who had, of course, no intention of repeating any of Dubois' playful embroideries on the facts. 'You will be glad, won't you, that she should have some one to protect her in such a strait?'—he added, after a minute's pause, his eyes on the fire.

'Yes,' said the other after a moment. 'Thank you. Won't you have your tea?'

Mr. Ancrum swallowed his emotion, and they sat down to table in silence. David played with some food, took one thing up after another, laid it down, and at last sprang up and seized his hat.

'Going out again?' asked the minister, trembling, he knew not why.

The lad muttered something. Instinctively the little lame fellow, who was closest to the door, rushed to it and threw himself against it.

'David, don't—don't go out alone—let me go with you!'

'I want to go out alone,' said David, his lips shaking. 'Why do you interfere with me?'

'Because—' and the short figure drew itself up, the minister's voice took a stern deep note, 'because when a man has once contemplated the sin of self-murder, those about him have no right to behave as though he were still like other innocent and happy people!'

David stood silent a moment, every limb trembling. Then his mouth set, and he made a step forward, one arm raised.

'Oh, yes!' cried Ancrum, 'you may fling me out of the way. My weakness and deformity are no match for you. Do, if you have the heart! Do you think I don't know that I rescued you from despair—that I drew you out of the very jaws of death? Do you think I don't guess that the news I have just given you withers the heart in your breast? You imagine, I suppose, that because I am deformed and a Sunday-school teacher, because I think something of religion, and can't read your French books, I cannot enter into what a *man* is and feels. Try me! When you were a little boy in my class, *my* life was already crushed in me—my tragedy was over. I have come close to passion and to sin; I'm not afraid of yours! You are alive here to-night, David Grieve, because I went to look for you on the mountains—lost sheep that you were—and found you, by God's mercy. You never thanked me—I knew you couldn't. Instead of your thanks I demand your confidence, here—now. Break down this silence between us. Tell me what you have done to bring your life to this pass. You have no father—I speak in his place, and I *deserve* that you should trust and listen to me!'

David looked at him with amazement—at the worn misshapen head thrown haughtily back—at the arms folded across the chest. Then his pride gave way, and that intolerable smart within could no longer hide itself. His soul melted within him; tears began to rain over his cheeks. He tottered to the fire and sat down, instinctively spreading his hands to the blaze, that word 'father' echoing in his ears; and by midnight Mr. Ancrum knew all the story, or as much of it as man could tell to man.

From this night of confession and of storm there emerged at least one result—the beginnings of a true and profitable bond

between David and Ancrum. Hitherto there had been expenditure of interest and affection on the minister's side, and a certain responsiveness and friendly susceptibility on David's; but no true understanding and contact, mind with mind. But in these agitated hours of such talk as belongs only to the rare crises of life, not only did Ancrum gain an insight into David's inmost nature, with all its rich, unripe store of feelings and powers, deeper than any he had possessed before, but David, breaking through the crusts of association, getting beyond and beneath the Sunday-school teacher and minister, came for the first time upon the real man in his friend, apart from trappings—cast off the old sense of pupilage, and found a brother instead of a monitor.

There came a moment when Ancrum, laying his hand on David's knee, told his own story in a few bare sentences, each of them, as it were, lightning on a dark background, revealing some few things with a ghastly plainness, only to let silence and mystery close again upon the whole. And there came another moment when the little minister, carried out of himself, fell into incoherent sentences, full of obscurity, yet often full of beauty, in which for the first time David came near to the living voice of religion speaking in its purest, intensest note. Christ was the burden of it all; the religion of pain, sacrifice, immortality; the religion of chastity and self-repression.

'Life goes from test to test, David; it's like any other business—the more you know the more's put on you. And this test of the man with the woman—there's no other cuts so deep. Aye, it parts the sheep from the goats. A man's failed in it—lost his footing—rolled into hell, before he knows where he is. "On this stone if a man fall"—I often put those words to it—there's all meanings in Scripture. Yes, you've stumbled, David—stumbled badly, but not more. There's mercy in it! You must rise again—you can. Accept yourself; accept the sin even; bear with yourself and go forward. That's what the Church says. Nothing can be undone, but break your pride, do penance, and all can be forgiven.

'But you don't admit the sin? A man has a right to the satisfaction of his own instincts. You asked a free consent and got it. What is law but a convention for miserable people who don't know how to love? Who was injured?

'David, that's the question of a fool. Were you and she the first man and woman in the world that ever loved? That's always the way; each man imagines the matter is still for his deciding, and he can no more decide it than he can tamper with the fact that fire burns or water drowns. All these centuries the human animal has fought with the human soul. And step by step the soul has registered her victories. She has won them only by feeling for the law and finding it—uncovering, bringing into light, the firm rocks beneath her feet. And on these rocks she rears her landmarks—marriage, the family, the State, the Church. Neglect them, and you sink into the quagmire from

which the soul of the race has been for generations struggling to save you. Dispute them! overthrow them—yes, if you can! You have about as much chance with them as you have with the other facts and laws amid which you live—physical or chemical or biological.

'I speak after the manner of men. If I were to speak after the manner of a Christian, I should say other things. I should ask how a man *dare* pluck from the Lord's hand, for his own wild and reckless use, a soul and body for which He died; how he, the Lord's bondsman, *dare* steal his joy, carrying it off by himself into the wilderness, like an animal his prey, instead of asking it at the hands, and under the blessing, of his Master; how he *dare*—a man under orders, and member of the Lord's body—forget the whole in his greed for the one—eternity in his thirst for the present!

'But no matter. Christ is nothing to you, nor Scripture, nor the Church—'

The minister broke off abruptly, his lined face working with emotion and prayer. David said nothing. In this stage of the conversation—the stage, as it were, of judgment and estimate—he could take no part. The time for it with him had not yet come. He had exhausted all his force in the attempt to explain himself—an attempt which began in fragmentary question and answer, and ended on his part in the rush of a confidence, an 'Apologia,' representing, in truth, that first reflex action of the mind upon experience, whence healing and spiritual growth were ultimately to issue. But for the moment he could carry the process no farther. He sat crouched over the flickering fire, saying nothing, letting Ancrum soliloquise as he pleased. His mind surged to and fro, indeed, as Ancrum talked between the poles of repulsion and response. His nature was not as Ancrum's, and every now and then the quick critical intellect flashed through his misery, detecting an assumption, probing an hypothesis. But in general his *feeling* gave way more and more. That moral sensitiveness in him which in its special nature was a special inheritance, the outcome of a long individualist development under the conditions of English Protestantism, made him from the first the natural prey of Ancrum's spiritual passion. As soon as a true contact between them was set up, David began to feel the religious temper and life in Ancrum draw him like a magnet. Not the forms of the thing, but the thing itself. In it, or something like it, as he listened, his heart suspected, for the first time, the only possible refuge from the agony of passion, the only possible escape from this fever of desire, jealousy, and love, in which he was consumed.

At the end he let Ancrum lead him up to bed and give him the bromide the Paris doctor had prescribed. When Ancrum softly put his head in, half an hour later, he was heavily asleep. Ancrum's face gleamed; he stole into the room carrying a rug and a pillow; and when David woke in the morning it was

to see the twisted form of the little minister stretched still and soldierlike beside him on the floor.

CHAPTER XIV

From that waking David rose and went about his work another man. As he moved about in the shop or in the streets, he was conscious of a gulf between his present self and his self of yesterday, which he could hardly explain. Simply the whole atmosphere and temperature of the soul was other, was different. He could have almost supposed that some process had gone on within him during the unconsciousness of sleep, of which he was now feeling the results; which had carried him on, without his knowing it, to a point in the highroad of life, far removed from that point where he had stood when his talk with Ancrum began. That world of enervating illusion, that 'kind of ghastly dreaminess,' as John Sterling called it, in which since his return he had lived with Elise, was gone, he knew not how—swept away like a cloud from the brain, a mist from the eyes. The sense of catastrophe, of things irrevocable and irreparable, the premature ageing of the whole man, remained—only the fever and the restlessness were past. Memory, indeed, was not affected. In some sort the scenes of his French experience would be throughout his life a permanent element in consciousness; but the persons concerned in them were dead—creatures of the past. He himself had been painfully re-born, and Pimodan's wife had no present personal existence for him. He turned himself deliberately to his old life, and took up the interests of it again one by one, but, as he soon discovered, with an insight, a power, a comprehension which had never yet been his. A moral and spiritual life destined to a rich development practically began for him with this winter—this awful winter of the agony of France.

His thoughts were often occupied now with Louie, but in a saner way. He could no longer, without morbidness, take on himself the whole responsibility of her miserable marriage. Human beings after all are what they make themselves. But the sense of his own share in it, and the perception of what her future life was likely to be, made him steadily accept beforehand the claims upon him which she was sure to press.

He had written to her early in September, when the siege was imminent, offering her money to bring her to England, and the protection of his roof during the rest of the war. And by a still later post than that which brought the news of Elise's marriage arrived a scrawl from Louie, written from a country town near Toulouse, whither she and Montjoie had retreated—apparently the sculptor's native place.

The letter was full of complaints—complaints of the war, which was being mismanaged by a set of rogues and fools who deserved stringing to the nearest tree; complaints of her husband,

who was a good-for-nothing brute; and complaints of her own health. She was expecting her confinement in the spring; if she got through it—which was not likely, considering the way in which she was treated—she should please herself about staying with such a man. *He* should not keep her for a day if she wanted to go. Meanwhile David might send her any money he could spare. There was not much of the six hundred left—*that* she could tell him; and she could not even screw enough for baby-clothes out of her husband. Very likely there would not be enough to pay for a nurse when her time came. Well, then she would be out of it—and a good job too.

She wished to be remembered to Dora; and Dora was especially to be told again that she needn't suppose St. Damian's was a patch on the real Catholic churches, because it wasn't. She—Louie—had been at the Midnight Mass in Toulouse Cathedral on Christmas Eve. That was something like. And down in the crypt they had a 'Bethlehem'—the sweetest thing you ever saw. There were the shepherds, and the wise men, and the angels—dolls, of course, but their dresses were splendid, and the little Jesus was dressed in white satin, embroidered with gold—*old* embroidery, tell Dora.

To this David had replied at once, sending money he could ill spare, and telling her to keep him informed of her whereabouts.

But the months passed on, and no more news arrived. He wrote again *viâ* Bordeaux, but with no result, and could only wait patiently till that eagle's grip, in which all French life was stifled, should be loosened.

Meanwhile his relation to another human being, whose life had been affected by the French episode, passed into a fresh phase. Two days after the news of Elise's marriage had reached him, he and John had just shut up the shop, and the young master was hanging over the counter under the gas, heavily conning a not very satisfactory business account.

John came in, took his hat and stick from a corner, and threw David a gruff 'good night.'

Something in the tone struck David's sore nerves like a blow. He turned abruptly—

'Look here, John! I can't stand this kind of thing much longer. Hadn't we better part? You've learnt a lot here, and I'll see you get a good place. You—you rub it in too long!'

John stood still, his big rough hands beginning to shake, his pink cheeks turning a painful crimson.

'You—you never said a word to me!' he flung out at last, incoherently, resentfully.

'Said a word to you? What do you mean? I told you the truth, and I would have told you more, if you hadn't turned against me as though I had been the devil himself. Do you suppose you are the only person who came to grief because of that French time? *Good God!*'

The last words came out with a low exasperation. The young

man leant against the counter, looking at his assistant with bitter, indignant eyes.

John first shrank from them, then his own were drawn to meet them. Even his slow perceptions, thus challenged, realised something of the truth. He gave way—as David might have made him give way long before, if his own misery had not made him painfully avoid any fresh shock of speech.

'Well!' said John, slowly, with a mighty effort; 'I'll not lay it agen you ony more. I'll say that. But if you want to get rid of me, you can. Only you'll be put to 't wi' t' printing.'

The two young fellows surveyed each other. Then suddenly David said, pushing him to the door:

'You're a great ass, John—get out, and good night to you.'

But next day the atmosphere was cleared, and, with inexpressible relief on both sides, the two fell back into the old brotherly relation. Poor John! He kept an old photograph of Louie in a drawer at his lodging, and, when he came home to bed, would alternately weep over and denounce it. But, all the same, his interest in David's printing ventures was growing keener and keener, and whenever business had been particularly exciting during the day, the performance with the photograph was curtailed or omitted at night. Let no scorn, however, be thought, on that account, of the true passion!—which had thriven on unkindness, and did but yield to the slow mastery of time.

The war thundered on. To Manchester, and to the cotton and silk industries of Lancashire generally, the tragedy of France meant on the whole a vast boom in trade. So many French rivals crippled—so much ground set free for English enterprise to capture—and, meanwhile, high profits for a certain number at least of Manchester and Macclesfield merchants, and brisk wages for the Lancashire operatives, especially for the silk-weavers. This, with of course certain drawbacks and exceptions, was the aspect under which the war mainly presented itself to Lancashire. Meanwhile, amid these teeming Manchester streets with their clattering lurries and overflowing warehouses, there was at least one Englishman who took the war hardly, in whom the spectacle of its wreck and struggle roused a feeling which was all moral, human, disinterested.

What was Regnault doing? David kept a watch on the newspapers, of which the Free Library offered him an ample store; but there was no mention of him in the English press that he could discover, and Barbier, of course, got nothing now from Paris.

Christmas was over. The last month of the siege, that hideous January of frost and fire, rushed past, with its alternations of famine within and futile battle without—Europe looking on appalled at this starved and shivering Paris, into which the shells were raining. At last—the 27th!—the capitulation! All was over; the German was master in Europe, and France lay at the feet of her conqueror.

Out to all parts streamed the letters which had been so long delayed. Barbier and David, walking together one bitter evening towards Barbier's lodgings, silent, with hanging heads, met the postman on Barbier's steps, who held out a packet. The Frenchman took it with a cry; the two rushed upstairs and fell upon the letters and papers it contained.

There—while Barbier sat beside him, groaning over the conditions of peace, over the enthronement of the Emperor-King at Versailles, within sight of the statue of Louis Quatorze, now cursing '*ces imbéciles du gouvernement !*' and now wiping the tears from his old cheeks with a trembling hand—David read the news of the fight of Buzenval, and the death of Regnault.

It seemed to him that he had always foreseen it—that from the very beginning Regnault's image in his thought had been haloed with a light of tragedy and storm—a light of death. His eyes devoured the long memorial article in which a friend of Regnault's had given the details of his last months of life. Barbier, absorbed in his own grief, heard not a sound from the corner where his companion sat crouched beneath the gas.

Everything—the death and the manner of it—was to him, as it were, in the natural order—fitting, right, such as might have been expected. His heart swelled to bursting as he read, but his eyes were dry.

This, briefly, was the story which he read.

Henri Regnault re-entered Paris at the beginning of Septem ber. By the beginning of October he was on active service, stationed now at Asnières, now at Colombes. In October or November he became engaged to a young girl, with whom he had been for long devotedly in love—ah! David thought of that sudden smile—the 'open door'! Their passion, cherished under the wings of war, did but give courage and heroism to both. Yet he loved most humanly! One night, in an interval of duty, on leaving the house where his *fiancée* lived, he found the shells of the bombardment falling fast in the street outside. He could not make up his mind to go—might not ruin befall the dear house with its inmates at any moment? So he wandered up and down outside for hours in the bitter night, watching, amid the rattle of the shells and the terrified cries of women and children from the houses on either side. At last, worn out and frozen with cold, but still unable to leave the spot, he knocked softly at the door he had left. The *concierge* came. 'Let me lie down awhile on your floor. Tell no one.' Then, appeased by this regained nearness to her, and by the sense that no danger could strike the one without warning the other, he wrapped himself in his soldier's cloak and fell asleep.

In November he painted his last three water-colours—visions of the East, painted for her, and as flower-bright as possible, 'because flowers were scarce' in the doomed city.

December came. Regnault spent Christmas night at the advanced post of Colombes. His captain wished to make him an

officer. 'Thanks, my captain,' said the young fellow of twenty-three; 'but if you have a good soldier in me, why exchange him for an indifferent officer? My example will be of more use to you than my commission.' Meanwhile the days and nights were passed in Arctic cold. Men were frozen to death round about him; his painter's hand was frostbitten. 'Oh! I can speak with authority on cold!' he wrote to his *fiancée;* 'this morning at least I know what it is to spend the night on the hard earth exposed to a glacial wind. Enough! *Je me réchaufferai à votre foyer.* I love you—I love my country—that sustains. Adieu!'

On the 17th, after a few days in Paris spent with her and some old friends, he was again ordered to the front. On Thursday the fight at Buzenval began with a brilliant success; in the middle of the day his *fiancée* still had news of him, brought by a servant. Night fell. The battle was hottest in a wood adjoining the park of Buzenval. Regnault and his painter-comrade Clairin were side by side. Suddenly the retreat was sounded, and the same instant Clairin missed his friend. He sought him with frenzy amid the trees in the darkening wood, called to him, peered into the faces of the dying—no answer! Ah! he must have been swept backwards by the rush of the retreat—Clairin will find him again.

Three days later the lost was found—one among two hundred corpses of National Guards carted into Père Lachaise. Clairin, mad with grief, held his friend in his arms—held, kissed the beautiful head, now bruised and stained past even *her* knowing, with its bullet-wound in the temple.

On his breast was found a medal with a silver tear hanging from it. She who had long worn it as a symbol of bereavement, in memory of dear ones lost to her, had given it to him in her first joy. 'I will reclaim it,' she had said, smiling, 'the first time you make me weep!' It was all that was brought back to her—all except a scrawled paper found in his pocket, containing some hurried and almost illegible words, written perhaps beside his outpost fire.

'We have lost many men—we must remake them—*better—stronger.* The lesson should profit us. No more lingering amid facile pleasures! Who dare now live for himself alone? It has been for too long the custom with us to believe in nothing but enjoyment and all bad passions. We have prided ourselves on despising everything good and worthy. No more of such contempt!'

Then—so the story ended—four days later, on the very day of the capitulation of Paris, Regnault was carried to his last rest. A figure in widow's dress walked behind. And to many standing by, amid the muffled roll of the drums and the wailing of the music, it was as though France herself went down to burial with her son.

David got up gently and went across to Barbier, who was sitting with his letters and papers before him, staring and stupefied, the lower jaw falling, in a trance of grief.

The young man put down the newspaper he had been reading in front of the old man.

'Read that some time; it will give you something to be proud of. I told you I knew him—he was kind to me.'

Barbier nodded, not understanding, and sought for his spectacles with shaking fingers. David quietly went out.

He walked home in a state of exaltation like a man still environed with the emotion of great poetry or great music. He said very little about Regnault in the days that followed to Ancrum or Barbier, even to Dora, with whom every week his friendship was deepening. But the memory of the dead man, as it slowly shaped itself in his brooding mind, became with him a permanent and fruitful element of thought. Very likely the Regnault whom he revered, whose name was henceforth a sacred thing to him, was only part as it were of the real Regnault. He saw the French artist with an Englishman's eyes—interpreted him in English ways—the ways, moreover, of a consciousness self-taught and provincial, however gifted and flexible. Only one or two aspects, no doubt, of that rich, self-tormented nature, reared amid the most complex movements of European intelligence, were really plain to him. And those aspects were specially brought home to him by his own mental condition. No matter. Broadly, essentially, he understood.

But thenceforward, just as Elise Delaunay had stood to him in the beginning for French art and life, and that ferment in himself which answered to them, so now in her place stood Regnault with those stern words upon his young and dying lips—'We have lost many men—we must remake them—*better!* Henceforward let no one dare live unto himself.' The Englishman took them into his heart, that ethical fibre in him, which was at last roused and dominant, vibrating, responding. And as the poignant images of death and battle faded he saw his hero always as he had seen him last—young, radiant, vigorous, pointing to the dawn behind Notre-Dame.

All life looked differently to David this winter. He saw the Manchester streets and those who lived in them with other perceptions. His old political debating interests, indeed, were comparatively slack; but persons—men and women, and their stories—for these he was instinctively on the watch. His eye noticed the faces he passed as it had never yet done—divined in them suffering, or vice, or sickness. All that he saw at this moment he saw tragically. The doors set open about him were still, as Keats, himself hurried to his end by an experience of passion, once expressed it, 'all dark,' and leading to darkness. There were times when Dora's faith and Ancrum's mysticism drew him irresistibly; other times when they were almost as repulsive to him as they had ever been, because they sounded to him like the formula of people setting out to explain the world 'with a light heart,' as Ollivier had gone to war.

But whether or no it could be explained, this world, he could not now help putting out his hand to meddle with and mend it; his mind fed on its incidents and conditions. The mill-girls standing on the Ancoats pavements; the drunken lurryman tottering out from the public-house to his lurry under the biting sleet of February; the ragged barefoot boys and girls swarming and festering in the slums; the young men struggling all about him for subsistence and success—these for the first time became realities to him, entered into that pondering of 'whence and whither' to which he had been always destined, and whereon he was now consciously started.

And as the months went on, his attention was once more painfully caught and held by Dora's troubles and Daddy's infirmities. For Daddy's improvement was short-lived. A bad relapse came in November; things again went downhill fast; the loan contracted in the summer had to be met, and under the pressure of it Daddy only became more helpless and disreputable week by week. And now, when Doctor Mildmay went to see him, Daddy, crouching over the fire, pretended to be deaf, and 'soft' besides. Nothing could be got out of him except certain grim hints that his house was his own till he was turned out of it. 'Looks pretty bad this time,' said the doctor to David once as he came out discomfited. 'After all, there's not much hope when the craving returns on a man of his age, especially after some years' interval.'

Daddy would sometimes talk frankly enough to David. At such times his language took an exasperating Shakespearean turn. He was abominably fond of posing as Lear or Jaques—as a man much buffeted, and acquainted with all the ugly secrets of life. Purcell stood generally for 'the enemy;' and to Purcell his half-mad fancy attributed most of his misfortunes. It was Purcell who had undermined his business, taken away his character, and driven him back to drink. David did not believe much of it, and told him so. Then, roused to wrath, the young man would speak his mind plainly as to Dora's sufferings and Dora's future. But to very little purpose.

'Aye, you're right—you're right enough,' said the old man to him on one of these occasions, with a wild, sinister look. 'Cordelia 'll hang for 't. If you want to do her any good, you must turn old Lear out—send him packing, back to the desert where he was before. There's elbow-room there!'

David looked up startled. The thin bronzed face had a restless flutter in it. Before he could reply Daddy had laid a hand on his shoulder.

'Davy, why don't you drink?'

'What do you mean?' said the young man, flushing.

'Davy, you've been as close as wax; but Daddy can see a thing or two when he chooses. Ah, you should drink, my lad. Let people prate—why shouldn't a man please himself? It's not the beastly liquor—that's the worst part of it—it's the *dreams*,

my lad, "the dreams that come." They say ether does the business cheapest. A teaspoonful—and you can be alternately in Paradise and the gutter four times a day. But the fools here don't know how to mix it.'

As he spoke the door opened, and there stood Dora on the threshold. She had just come back from a Lenten service; her little worn prayer-book was in her hand. She stood trembling, looking at them both—at David's tight, indignant lips—at her father's excitement.

Daddy's eye fell on her prayer-book, and David, looking up, saw a quick cloud of distaste, aversion, pass over his weird face.

She put out some supper, and pressed David to stay. He did so in the vain hope of keeping Daddy at home. But the old vagrant was too clever for both of them. When David at last got up to go, Daddy accompanied him downstairs, and stood in the doorway looking up Market Place till David had disappeared in the darkness. Then with a soft and cunning hand he drew the door to behind him, and stood a moment lifting his face to the rack of moonlit cloud scudding across the top of the houses opposite. As he did so, he drew a long breath, with the gesture of one to whom the wild airs of that upper sky, the rush of its driving wind, were stimulus and delight. Then he put down his head and stole off to the right, towards the old White Inn in Hanging Ditch, while Dora was still listening in misery for his return step upon the stairs.

A week later Dora, not knowing how the restaurant could be kept going any longer, and foreseeing utter bankruptcy and ruin as soon as the shutters should be up, took her courage in both hands, swallowed all pride, and walked up to Half Street to beg help of Purcell. After all he was her mother's brother. In spite of that long feud between him and Daddy, he would surely, for his own credit's sake, help them to escape a public scandal. For all his rodomontade, Daddy had never done him any real harm that she could remember.

So she opened the shop door in Half Street, quaking at the sound of the bell she set in motion, and went in.

Twenty minutes afterwards she came out again, looking from side to side like a hunted creature, her veil drawn close over her face. She fled on through Market Place, across Market Street and St. Ann's Square, and through the tall dark warehouse streets beyond—drawn blindly towards Potter Street and her only friend.

David was putting out some books on the stall when he looked up and saw her. Perceiving that she was weeping and breathless, he asked her into the back room, while John kept guard in the shop.

There she leant against the mantelpiece, shaking from head to foot, and wiping away her tears. He soon gathered that she had been to Purcell, and that Purcell had dismissed her appeal

with every circumstance of cold and brutal insult. The sooner her father was in the workhouse or the lunatic asylum, and she in some nunnery or other, the sooner each would be in their right place. He was a vagabond, and she a Papist—let them go where they belonged. He was not going to spend a farthing of his hard-earned money to help either of them to impose any further on the world. And then he let fall a word or two which showed her that he had probably been at the bottom of some merciless pressure lately applied to them by one or two of their chief creditors. The bookseller's hour was come, and he was looking on at the hewing of his Agag with the joy of the righteous. So might the Lord avenge him of all his enemies.

Dora could hardly give an account of it. The naked revelation of Purcell's hate, of so hard and vindictive a soul, had worked upon her like some physical horror. She had often suspected the truth, but now that it was past doubting, the moral shock was terrible to this tender mystical creature, whose heart by day and night lived a hidden life with the Crucified and with His saints. Oh, how could he, how could anyone, be so cruel?—her father getting an old man! and she, who had never quarrelled with him—who had nursed Lucy! So she wailed, gradually recovering her poor shaken soul—calming it, indeed, all the while out of sight, with quick piteous words of prayer and submission.

David stood by, pale with rage and sympathy. But what could he do? He was himself in the midst of a hard struggle, and had neither money nor credit available. They parted at last, with the understanding that he was to go and consult Ancrum, and that she was to go to her friends at St. Damian's.

Till now poor Dora had carefully refrained from bringing her private woes into relation with her life in and through St. Damian's. Within that enchanted circle, she was another being with another existence. There she had never asked anything for herself, except the pardon and help of God, before His altar, and through His priests. Rather she had given—given all that she had—her time, such as she could spare from Daddy and her work, to the Sunday-school and the sick; her hard-won savings on her clothes, and on the extra work, for which she would often sit up night after night when Daddy believed her asleep, to the poor and to the services of the Church. There she had a position, almost an authority of her own—the authority which comes of self-spending. But now this innocent pride must be humbled. For the sake of her father, and of those to whom they owed money they could not pay, she must go and ask—beg instead of giving. All she wanted was time. Her embroidery work was now better paid than ever. If the restaurant were closed she could do more of it. In the end she believed she could pay everybody. But she must have time. Yes, she would go to Father Vernon that night! He would understand, even if he could not help her.

Alas! Next morning David was just going out to dinner,

when a message was brought him from Market Place. He started off thither at a run, and found a white and gasping Dora wandering restlessly up and down the upper room; while Sarah, the old Lancashire cook, very red and very tearful, followed her about trying to administer consolation. Daddy had disappeared. After coming in about eleven the night before and going noisily to his room—no doubt for the purpose of deluding Dora—he must have stolen down again and made off without being either seen or heard by anybody. Even the policeman on duty in Market Place had noticed nothing. He had taken what was practically the only money left them in the world—about twenty pounds—from Dora's cashbox, and some clothes, packing these last in a knapsack which still remained to him from the foreign tramps of years before.

The efforts made by Dora, David, and Ancrum, whom David called in to help, to track the fugitive, were quite useless. Daddy had probably disguised himself, for he had all the tricks of the adventurer, and could 'make up' in former days so as to deceive even his own wife.

Strange outbreak of a secret ineradicable instinct! He had been Dora's for twenty years. But life with her at Leicester, and during their first years at Manchester, had thriven too evenly, and in the end the old wanderer had felt his blood prick within him, and the mania of his youth revive. His business had grown hateful to him; it was probably the comparative monotony of success which had first reawakened the travel-hunger—then restlessness, conflict, leading to drink, and, finally, escape.

'He will come back, you know,' said Dora one night, sharply, to David. 'He served my mother so many times. But he always came back.'

They were sitting together in the shuttered and dismantled restaurant. There was to be a sale on the premises on the morrow, and the lower room had that day been filled with all the 'plant' of the restaurant, and all or almost all the poor household stuff from upstairs. It was an odd, ramshackle collection; and poor Dora, who had been walking round looking at the auction tickets, was realising with a sinking heart how much debt the sale would still leave unprovided for. But she had found friends. Father Vernon had met the creditors for her. There had been a composition, and she had insisted upon working off to the best of her power whatever sum might remain after the possession and goodwill had been sold. She could live on a crust, and she was sure of continuous work both for the great church-furniture shop in Manchester which had hitherto employed her and also for the newly established School of Art Needlework at Kensington. As an embroideress there were few more delicately trained eyes and defter hands than hers in England.

When she spoke of her father's coming back, David was seized with pity. She could not sit down in these days when her work was out of her hands. Perpetual movement seemed her only

relief. The face, that seemed so featureless but was so expressive, had lost its sweet, shining look; the mouth had the pucker of pain; and she had piteous startled ways quite unlike her usual soft serenity.

'Oh, yes, he will come back—some time,' he said, to comfort her.

'I don't doubt that—never. But I wonder how he could go like that—how he had the heart! I did think he cared for me. I wasn't ever nasty to him—at least, I don't remember. Perhaps he thought I was. But only we two—and always together—since mother died!'

She began to tidy some of the lots, to tie some of the bundles of odds and ends together more securely—talking all the while in a broken way. She was evidently bewildered and at sea. If she could have remembered any misconduct of her own, it seemed to David, it would have been a relief to her. Her faith taught her that love was all-powerful—but it had availed her nothing!

The sale came; and the goodwill of the Parlour was sold to a man who was to make a solid success of what with Daddy had been a half-crazy experiment.

Dora went to live in Ancoats, that teeming, squalid quarter which lies but a stone's-throw from the principal thoroughfares and buildings of Manchester, and in its varieties of manufacturing life and population presents types which are all its own. Here are the cotton operatives who work the small proportion of mills still remaining within the bounds of Manchester—the spinners, minders, reelers, reed-makers, and the rest; here are the calico-printers and dyers, the warehousemen and lurrymen; and here too are the sellers of 'fents,' and all the other thousand and one small trades and occupations which live on and by the poor. The quarter has one broad thoroughfare or lung, which on a sunny day is gay, sightly, and alive; then to north and south diverge the innumerable low red-brick streets where the poor live and work; which have none, however, of the trim uniformity which belongs to the workers' quarters of the factory towns pure and simple. Manchester in its worst streets is more squalid, more haphazard, more nakedly poor even than London. Yet, for all that, Manchester is a city with a common life, which London is not. The native Lancashire element, lost as it is beneath many supervening strata, is still there and powerful; and there are strong well-defined characteristic interests and occupations which bind the whole together.

Here Dora settled with a St. Damian's girl friend, a shirt-maker. They lived over a sweetshop, in two tiny rooms, in a street even more miscellaneous and half-baked than its neighbours. Outside was ugliness; inside, unremitting labour. But Dora soon made herself almost happy. By various tender shifts she had saved out of the wreck in Market Place Daddy's bits of engravings and foreign curiosities, his Swiss carvings and shells, his skins and stuffed birds; very moth-eaten and melancholy

these last, but still safe. There, too, was his chair; it stood beside the fire; he had but to come back to it. Many a time in the week did she suddenly rise that she might go to the door and listen; or crane her head out of window, agitated by a figure, a sound, as her mother had done before her.

Then her religious life was free to expand as it had never been yet. Very soon, in Passion Week, she and her friend had gathered a prayer-meeting of girls, hands from the mill at the end of the street. They came for twenty minutes in the dinner-hour, delicate-faced comely creatures many of them, with their shawls over their heads: Dora prayed and sang with them, a soft tremulous passion in every word and gesture. They thought her a saint—began to tell her their woes and their sins. In the evenings and on Sunday she lived in the coloured and scented church, with its plaintive music, its luminous altar, its suggestions both of a great encompassing church order of undefined antiquity and infinite future, and of a practical system full of support for individual weakness and guidance for the individual will. The beauty of the ceremonial appealed to those instincts in her which found other expression in her glowing embroideries; and towards the church order, with its symbols, observances, mysteries, the now solitary girl felt a more passionate adoration, a more profound humility, than ever before. Nothing too much could be asked of her. During Lent, but for the counsels of Father Russell himself, a shrewd man, well aware that St. Damian's represented the one Anglican oasis in an incorrigibly moderate Manchester, even her serviceable and elastic strength would have given way, so hard she was to that poor 'sister the body,' which so many patient ages have gone to perfect and adjust.

Half of the romance, the poetry of her life, lay here; the other half in her constant expectation of her father, and in the visits of David Grieve. Once a week at least David mounted to the little room where the two girls sat working; sometimes now, oh joy! he went to church with her; sometimes he made her come out to Eccles, or Cheadle, or the Irwell valley for a walk. She used various maidenly arts and self-restraints to prevent scandal. At home she never saw him alone, and she now never went to Potter Street. Still, out of doors they were often alone. There was no concealment, and the persons who took notice assumed that they were keeping company and going to be married. When such things were said to Dora she met them with a sweet and quiet denial, at first blushing, then with no change at all of look or manner.

Yet the girl who lived with her knew that the first sound of David's rap on the door below sent a tremor through the figure beside her, that the slight hand would go up instinctively to the coiled hair, straightening and pinning, and that the smiling, listening, sometimes disputing Dora who talked with David Grieve was quite different from the dreamy and ascetic Dora who sat beside her all day.

Why did David go? As a matter of fact, with every month of this winter and spring, Dora's friendship became more necessary to him. All the brotherly feeling he would once so willingly have spent on Louie, he now spent on Dora. She became in truth a sister to him. He talked to her as he would have done to Louie had she been like Dora. No other relationship ever entered his mind; and he believed that he was perfectly understood and met in the same way.

Both often spoke of Lucy, towards whom David in this new and graver temper felt both kindly and gratefully. She, poor child, wrote to Dora from time to time letters full of complaints of her father and of his tyranny in keeping her away from Manchester. He indeed seemed to have taken a morbid dislike to his daughter, and what company he wanted he got from the widow, whom yet he had never made up his mind to marry. Lucy chafed and rebelled against the perpetual obstacles he placed in the way of her returning home, but he threatened to make her earn her own living if she disobeyed him, and in the end she always submitted. She poured herself out bitterly, however, to Dora, and Dora was helplessly sorry for her, feeling that her idle wandering life with the various aunts and cousins she boarded with was excessively bad for her—seeing that Lucy was not of the stuff to fashion new duties or charities for herself out of new relations—and that the small, vain, and yet affectionate nature ran an evil chance of ultimate barrenness and sourness.

But what could she do? In every letter there was some mention of David Grieve or request for news about him. About the visit to Paris Dora had written discreetly, telling only what she knew, and nothing of what she guessed. In reality, as the winter passed on, Dora watched him more and more closely, waiting for the time when that French mystery, whatever it was, should have ceased to overshadow him, and she might once more scheme for Lucy. He must marry—that she knew!—whatever he might think. Anyone could see that, with the returning spring, in spite of her friendship and Ancrum's, he felt his loneliness almost intolerable. It was clear, too, as his manhood advanced, that he was naturally drawn to women, naturally dependent on them. In spite of his great intelligence, to her so formidable and mysterious, Dora had soon recognised, as Elise had done, the eager, clinging, confiding temper of his youth. And beneath the transformation of passion and grief it was still there—to be felt moving often like a wounded thing.

CHAPTER XV

It was a showery April evening. But as it was also a Saturday, Manchester took no heed at all of the weather. The streets were thronged. All the markets were ablaze with light, and full of buyers. In Market Place, Dora's old home, the covered glass booths beside the pavement brought the magic of the spring into

the very heart of the black and swarming town, for they were a fragrant show of daffodils, hyacinths, primroses, and palms. Their lights shone out into the rainy mist of the air, on the glistening pavements, and on the faces of the cheerful chattering crowd, to which the shawled heads so common among the women gave the characteristic Lancashire touch. Above rose the dark tower of the Exchange; on one side was the Parlour, still dedicated to the kindly diet of corn- and fruit-eating men, but repainted, and launched on a fresh career of success by Daddy's successor; on the other, the gabled and bulging mass of the old Fishing-tackle House, with a lively fish and oyster traffic surging in the little alleys on either side of it.

Market Street, too, was thronged. In the great cheap shop at the head of it, aflame with lights from top to base, you could see the buyers story after story, swarming like bees in a glass hive. Farther on in the wide space of the Infirmary square, the omnibuses gathered, and a detachment of redcoats just returned from rifle-practice on the moors crowded the pavement outside the hospital, amid an admiring escort of the youth of Manchester, while their band played lustily.

But especially in Peter Street, the street of the great public halls and principal theatres, was Manchester alive and busy. Nilsson was singing at the 'Royal,' and the rich folk were setting down there in their broughams and landaus. But in the great Free Trade Hall there was a performance of 'Judas Maccabeus' given by the Manchester Philharmonic Society, and the vast place, filled from end to end with shilling and two-shilling seats, was crowded with the 'people.' It was a purely local scene, unlike anything of the same kind in London, or any other capital. The performers on the platform were well known to Manchester, unknown elsewhere; Manchester took them at once critically and affectionately, remembering their past, looking forward to their future; the Society was one of which the town was proud; the conductor was a character, and popular; and half the audience at least was composed of the relations and friends of the chorus. Most people had a 'Susan,' an 'Alice,' or a 'William' making signs to them at intervals from the orchestra; and when anything went particularly well, and the applause was loud, the friends of Susan or Alice beamed with a proprietary pride.

Looking down upon this friendly cheerful throng sat David Grieve, high up in the balcony. It had been his wont of late to frequent these cheap concerts, where as a rule, owing to the greater musical sensitiveness of the English North as compared with the South, the music is singularly good. During the past winter, indeed, music might almost be said to have become part of his life. He had no true musical gift, but in the paralysis of many of his natural modes of expression which had overtaken him music supplied a need. In it he at least, and at this moment, found a voice and an emotion not too personal or poignant. He lost himself in it, and was soothed.

Towards the beginning of the last part he suddenly with a start recognised Lucy Purcell in the body of the hall. She was sitting with friends whom he did not know, staring straight before her. He bent forward and looked at her carefully. In a minute or two he decided that she was looking tired, cross, and unhappy, and that she was not attending to the music at all.

So at last her father had let her come home. As to her looks, to be daughter to Purcell was to be sure of disagreeable living; and perhaps her future stepmother had been helping Purcell to annoy her.

Poor little thing! David felt a strong wish to speak to her after the performance. Meanwhile he tried to attract her attention, but in vain. It seemed to him that she looked right along the bench on which he sat; but there was no flash in her face; it remained as tired and frowning as before.

He ran downstairs before the end of the last chorus, and placed himself near the door by which he felt sure she would come out. He was just in time. She and her party also came out early before the rush. There was a sudden crowd of people in the doorway, and then he heard a little cry. Lucy stood before him, flushed, pulling at her glove, and saying something incoherent. But before he could understand she had turned back to the two women who accompanied her and spoken to them quickly; the elder replied, with a sour look at David; the younger laughed behind her muff. Lucy turned away wilfully, and at that instant the crowd from within, surging outwards, swept them away from her, and she and David found themselves together.

'Come down those steps there to the right,' she said peremptorily. 'They are going the other way.'

By this time David himself was red. She hurried him into the street, however, and then he saw that she was breathing hard, and that her hands were clasped together as though she were trying to restrain herself.

'Oh, I am so unhappy!' she burst out, 'so unhappy! And it was all, you know, to begin with, because of you, Mr. Grieve! But oh! I forgot you'd been ill—you look so different!'

She paused suddenly, while over her face there passed an expression half startled, half shrinking, as of one who speaks familiarly, as he supposes, to an old friend and finds a stranger. She could not take her eyes off him. What was this new dignity, this indefinable change of manner?

'I am not different,' he said hastily, 'not in the least. So your father has never forgiven you the kindness you did me? I don't know what to say, Miss Lucy. I'm both sorry and ashamed.'

'Forgiven it!—no, nor ever will,' she said shortly, walking on. and forgetting everything but her woes. 'Oh, do listen! Come up Oxford Street. I must tell some one, or I shall die! I must see Dora. Father's forbidden me to go, and I haven't had a moment to myself yet. She hasn't written to me since she left

the Parlour, and no one 'll tell me where she is. And that *odious* woman! Oh, she is an abominable wretch! She wants to claim all my things—all the bits of things that were mother's, and I have always counted mine. She won't let me take any of them away. And she's stolen a necklace of mine—yes, Mr. Grieve, *stolen* it. I don't care *that* about it—not in itself; but to have your things taken out of your drawers without "*With* your leave" or "*By* your leave"!— She's made father worse than ever. I thought he had found her out, but he is actually going to marry her in July, and they won't let me live at home unless I make a solemn promise to "perform my religious duties" and behave properly to the chapel people. And I never will, not if I starve for it—nasty, canting, crawling, backbiting things! Then father says I can live away, and he'll make me an allowance. And what do you think he'll allow me?'

She faced round upon him with curving lip and eyes aflame. David averred truly that he could not guess.

'Thirty—pounds—a—year!' she said with vicious emphasis. 'There—would you believe it? If you put a dirty little chit of a nurse-girl on board wages, it would come to more than that. And he just bought three houses in Millgate, and as rich as anything! Oh, it's shameful, I call it, *shameful!*'

She put her handkerchief to her eyes. Then she quickly withdrew it again and turned to him, remembering how his first aspect had surprised her. In the glare of some shops they were passing David could see her perfectly, and she him. Certainly, in the year which had elapsed since they had met she had ripened, or rather softened, into a prettier girl. Whether it was the milder Southern climate in which she had been living, or the result of physical weakness left by her attack of illness in the preceding spring, at any rate her bloom was more delicate, the lines of her small, pronounced face more finished and melting. As for her, now that she had paused a moment in her flow of complaint, she was busy puzzling out the change in him. David became vaguely conscious of it, and tried to set her off again.

'But you'd rather live away,' he said, 'when they treat you like that? You'd rather be independent, I should think? I would!'

'Oh, catch me living with that woman!' she cried passionately. 'She's no better than a thief, a common thief. I don't care who hears me. And *made up!* Oh, its shocking! It seems to me there's nothing I can talk about at home now—whether it's getting old—or teeth—or hair—I'm always supposed to be "passing remarks." And I wouldn't mind if it was my Hastings cousins I had to live with. But they can't have me any more, and now I'm at Wakely with the Astons.'

'The Aston's?' David echoed. Like most people of small training and intelligence, Lucy instinctively supposed that whatever was familiar to her was familiar to other people.

'Oh, don't you know? It's father's sister who married a mill-

overseer at Wakely. And they're very kind to me. Only they're *dreadfully* pious too—not like father—I don't mean that. And, you see—it's Robert!'

'Who's Robert?' asked David amused by her blush, and admiring the trim lightness of her figure and walk.

'Robert's the eldest son. He's a reedmaker. He's got enough to marry on—at least he thinks so.'

'And he wants to marry you?'

She nodded. Then she looked at him, laughing, her naturally bright eyes sparkling through the tears still wet in them.

'Father's a Baptist, you know—that's bad enough—but Robert's a *Particular* Baptist. I asked him what it meant once when he was pestering me to marry him. "Well, you see," he said, "a man must *show* that his heart's changed—we don't take in everybody like—we want to be *sure* they're real converted." I don't believe it does mean that—father says it doesn't. Anyway I asked him whether if I married him he'd want me to be a Particular Baptist too. And he said, very slow and solemn, that of course he should look for religious fellowship in his wife, but that he didn't want to hurry me. I laughed till I cried at the thought of *me* going to that hideous chapel of his, dressed like his married sister. But sometimes, I declare, I think he'll make me do what he wants—he's got a way with him. He sticks to a thing as tight as wax, and I don't care what becomes of me sometimes.'

She pouted despondently, but her quick eye stole to her companion's face.

'Oh, no, you won't marry Robert, Miss Lucy,' said David cheerfully. 'You've had a will of your own ever since I've known you. But what are you at home for now?'

'Why, I told you—to pack up my things. But I can't find half of them; she—she's walked off with them. Oh, I'm going off again as soon as possible—I can't stand it. But I must see Dora. Father says I shan't visit Papists. But I'll watch my chance. I'll get there to-morrow—see if I don't! Tell me what she's doing, Mr. Grieve.'

David told her all he knew. Lucy's comments were very characteristic. She was equally hard on Daddy's ill-behaviour and Dora's religion, with a little self-satisfied hardness that would have provoked David but for its childish *naïveté*. Many of the things that she said of Dora, however, showed real feeling, real affection.

'She *is* good,' she wound up at last with a long sigh.

'Yes, she's the best woman I ever saw,' said David slowly; 'she's beautiful, she's a saint.'

Lucy looked up quickly—her dismayed eyes fastened on him—then they fell again, and her expression became suddenly piteous and humble.

'You're still getting on well, aren't you?' she said timidly. 'You were glad not to be turned out, weren't you?'

Somehow, for the life of her, she could not at that moment help reminding him of her claim upon him. He admitted it very

readily, told her broadly how he was doing and what new connections he was making. It was pleasant to tell her, pleasant to speak to this changing rose-leaf face with its eager curiosity and attention.

'And you were ill when you were abroad?—so Dora said. Father, of course, made unkind remarks—you may be sure of that!—*he*'ll set stories about when he doesn't like anybody. I didn't believe a word.'

'It don't matter,' said David hotly, but he flushed. His desire to wring Purcell's neck was getting inconveniently strong.

'No, not a bit,' she declared. Then she suddenly broke into laughter. 'Oh, Mr. Grieve, how many assistants do you think father's had since you left?'

And she chatted on about these individuals, describing a series of dolts, their achievements and personalities, with a great deal of girlish fun. Her companion enjoyed her little humours and egotisms, enjoyed the walk and her companionship. After the strain of the day, a day spent either in the toil of a developing business or under a difficult pressure of thought, this light girl's voice brought a gay, relaxed note into life. The spring was in the air, and his youth stirred again in that cavern where grief had buried it.

'Oh, *dear*, I must go home,' she said at last regretfully, startled by a striking clock. 'Father'll be just mad. Of course, he'll hear all about my meeting you—I don't care. I'm not going to be parted from all my friends to please him, particularly now he's turned me out for good—from Dora and—'

'From you,' she would have said, but she became suddenly conscious and her voice failed.

'No, indeed! And your friends won't forget you, Miss Lucy. You'll go and see Dora to-morrow?'

'Yes, if I can give them the slip at home.'

There was a pause, and then he said—

'And will you allow me to visit you at Wakely some Sunday? I know those moors well.'

She reddened all over with delight. There was something in the little stiffness of the request which gave it importance.

'I wish you would; it's not far,' she stammered. 'Aunt Miriam would be glad to see you.'

They walked back rapidly along Mosley Street and into Market Place. There she stopped and shyly asked him to leave her. Almost all the Saturday-night crowd had disappeared from the streets. It was really late, and she became suddenly conscious that this walk of hers might reasonably be regarded at home as a somewhat bold proceeding.

'I wish you'd let me see you right home,' he said, detaining her hand in his.

'Oh, no, no—I shall catch it enough as it is. Oh, they'll let me in! Will it be next Sunday, Mr. Grieve?'

'No, the Sunday after. Can I do anything for you?'

He came closer to her, seeming to envelope her in his tall, protecting presence. It was impossible for him to ignore her girlish flutter, her evident joy in having seen and talked to him again, in spite of her dread of her father. Nor did he wish to ignore them. They were unexpectedly sweet to him, and he surprised himself.

'Oh no, nothing,—but it's very good of you to say so,' she said impulsively; '*very*. Good night again.'

And instinctively she put out another small hand, which also he took, so holding her prisoner a moment.

'Look here,' he said, 'I'll just slip down that side of the Close and wait till I see you get safe in. Good night; I *am* glad I saw you!'

She ran away in a blind whirl of happiness up the steps into the passage of Half Street. He slipped down to the left and waited, looking through the railings across the corner of the Close, his eyes fixed on that upper window, where he had so often sat, parleying alternately with the cathedral and Voltaire.

Lucy rang, the door opened, there were loud sounds within, but she was admitted; it closed behind her.

David was soon in his back room, kindling a lamp and a bit of fire to read by. But when it was done he sat bent forward over the blaze, till the cathedral clock chimed the small hours, thinking.

She was so unformed and childish, that poor little thing!—surely a man could make what he would of her. She would give him affection and duty; the core of the nature was sound, and her little humours would bring life into a house.

He had but to put out his hand—that was plain enough. And why not? Was any humbler draught to be for ever put aside, because the best wine had been poured to waste?

Then the rebellions of an unquenched romance, an untamed heart, beset him. Surging waves of bitterness and pain, the after-swell of that tempest in which his youth had so nearly foundered, seemed to bear him away to seas of desolation.

After all that had happened, the greed for personal joy he every now and then detected in himself surprised and angered him by its strength. The truth was that in whole tracts of his nature he was still a boy, still young beyond his years, and it was the conflict in him between youth's hot immaturity and a man's baffling experience which made the pain of his life.

He meant to go to Wakely on the next Sunday but one—that he was certain of—but as to what he was to do and say when he got there he was perhaps culpably uncertain. But in his weakness and *sehnsucht* he dwelt upon the thought of Lucy more and more.

Then Dora—foolish saint!—came upon the scene.

Lucy found her way to the street in Ancoats where Dora lived, the morning after her talk with David, and the two cousins spent an agitated hour together. Lucy could hardly find time to ask Dora about her sorrows, so occupied was she in recounting all her

own adventures. She was to go back to Wakely that very afternoon. Purcell had been absolutely unapproachable since the cousin who had escorted Lucy to the Free Trade Hall the night before had in her own defence revealed the secret of that young lady's behaviour. Pack and go she should! He wouldn't have such a hussy another night under his roof. Let them do with her as could.

'I thought he would have beaten me this morning,' Lucy candidly confessed. There was a red spot on each cheek, and she was evidently glorying in martyrdom. 'He looked like a devil—a real devil. Why can't he be fond of me, and let me alone, like other girls' fathers? I believe he *is* fond of me somehow, but he wants to break my spirit—'

She tossed her head significantly.

'Lucy, you know you ought to give in when you can,' said the perplexed Dora, with rebuke in her voice.

'Oh, nonsense!' said Lucy. 'You can't—it's ridiculous. Well, he'll quarrel with that woman some day—I'm sure *she's* his match—and then maybe he'll want me back. But perhaps he won't get me.'

Dora looked up with a curious expression, half smiling, half wistful. She had already heard all the story of the walk.

'O Dora!' cried the child, laying down her head on the table beneath her cousin's eyes, 'Dora, I do believe he's beginning to care. You see he *asked* to come to Wakely. I didn't ask him. Oh, if it all comes to nothing again, I shall break my heart!'

Dora smoothed the fine brown hair, and said affectionate things, but vaguely, as if she was not quite certain what to say.

'He does look quite different, somehow,' continued Lucy. 'Why do you think he was so long away over there, Dora? Father says nasty things about it—says he fell into bad company and lost his money.'

'I don't know how uncle Purcell can know,' said Dora indignantly. 'He's always thinking the worst of people. He was ill, for Mr. Ancrum told me, and he's the only person that *does* know. And anyone can see he isn't strong yet.'

'Oh, and he is so handsome!' sighed Lucy, 'handsomer than ever. There isn't a man in Manchester to touch him.'

Dora laughed out and called her a 'little silly.' But, as privately in her heart of hearts she was of the same opinion, her reproof had not much force.

When Lucy left, Dora put away her work, and, lifting a flushed face, walked to the window and stood there looking out. A pale April sun was shining on the brewery opposite, and touched the dark waters of the canal under the bridge to the left. The roofs of the squalid houses abutting on the brewery were wet with rain. Through a gap she could see a laundress's back-yard mainly filled with drying clothes, but boasting besides a couple of pink flowering currants just out, and holding their own for a few

brief days against the smuts of Manchester. Here and there a man out of work lounged, pipe in mouth, at his open door, silently absorbing the sunshine and the cheerfulness of the moist blue over the house-tops. There was a new sweetness and tenderness in the spring air—or were they in Dora's soul?

She leant her head against the window, and remained there with her hands clasped before her for some little time—for her, a most unusual idleness.

Yes, Lucy was very obstinate. Dora had never thought she would have the courage to fight her father in this way. And selfish, too. She had spoken only once of Daddy, and that in a way to make the daughter wince. But she was so young—such a child!—and would be ruined if she were left to this casual life, and people who didn't understand her. A husband to take care of her, and children—they would be the making of her.

And he! Dora's eyes filled with tears. All this winter the change in him, the silent evidences of a shock all the more tragic to her because of its mystery, had given him a kind of sacredness in her eyes. She fell thinking, besides, of the times lately he had been to church with her. Ah, she *was* glad he had heard that sermon, that beautiful sermon of Canon Welby's in Passion Week! He had said nothing about it, but she knew it had been meant for clever, educated men—men like him. The church, indeed, had been full of men—her neighbours had told her that several of the gentlemen from Owens College had been there.

That evening David knocked at the door below about half-past eight. Dora got up quickly and went across to her room-fellow, a dark-faced stooping girl, who took her shirt-maker's slavery without a murmur, and loved Dora.

'Would you mind, Mary?' she said timidly. 'I want to speak to Mr. Grieve.'

The girl looked up, understood, stopped her machine, and, hastily gathering some pieces together that wanted buttonholes, went off into the little inner room and shut the door.

Dora knelt and with restless hands put the bit of fire together. She had just thrown a handkerchief over her canaries. On the frame a piece of her work, a fine altar-cloth gleaming with golds, purples, and pale pinks, stood uncovered. The deal table, the white walls on which hung Daddy's old prints, the bare floor with its strip of carpet, were all spotlessly clean. The tea had been put away. Daddy's vacant chair stood in its place.

When David came in he found her sitting pensively on a little wooden stool by the fire. Generally he gossipped while the two girls worked busily away—sometimes he read to them. To-night as he sat down he felt something impending.

Dora talked of Lucy's visit. They agreed as to the folly and brutality of Purcell's treatment of her, and laughed together over the marauding stepmother.

Then there was a pause. Dora broke it. She was sitting upright on the stool, looking straight into his face.

'Will you not be cross if I say something?' she asked, catching her breath. 'It's not my business.'

'Say it, please.' But he reddened instantly.

'Lucy's—Lucy's—got a fancy for you,' she said tremulously, shrinking from her own words. 'Perhaps it's a shame to say it—oh, it may be! You haven't told me anything, and she's given me no leave. But she's had it a long time.'

'I don't know why you say so,' he replied half sombrely.

His flush had died away, but his hand shook on his knee.

'Oh, yes, you do,' she cried; 'you must know. Lucy can't keep even her own secrets. But she's got such a warm heart! I'm sure she has. If a man would take her and be kind to her, she'd make him happy.'

She stopped, looking at him intently.

Then suddenly she burst out, laying her hand on the arm of his chair—Daddy's chair:

'Don't be angry; you've been like a brother to me.'

He took her hand and pressed it, reassuring her.

'But how can I make her happy?' he said, with his head on his hand. 'I don't want to be a fool and deny what you say, for the sake of denying it. But—'

His voice sank into silence. Then, as she did not speak, he looked up at her. She was sitting, since he had released her, with her arms locked behind her, frowning in her intensity of thought, her last energy of sacrifice.

'You would make her happy,' she said slowly, 'and she'd be a loving wife. She's flighty is Lucy, but there's nothing bad in her.'

Both were silent for another minute, then, by a natural reaction, both looked at each other and laughed.

'I'm making rather free with you, I'm bound to admit that,' she said, with a merry shamefaced expression, which brought out the youth in her face.

'Well, give me time, Miss Dora. If—if anything did come of it, I should have to let Purcell know, and there'd be flat war. You've thought of that?'

Certainly, Dora had thought of it. They might have to wait, and Purcell would probably refuse to give or leave Lucy any money. All the better, according to David. Nothing would ever induce him to take a farthing of his ex-master's hoards.

But here, by a common instinct, they stopped planning, and David resolutely turned the conversation. When they parted, however, Dora was secretly eager and hopeful. It was curious how little the father's rights weighed with so scrupulous a soul. Whether it was his behaviour to her father which had roused an unconscious hardness even in her gentle nature, or whether it was the subtle influence of his Dissent, as compared with the nascent dispositions she seemed to see in David—anyway, Dora's conscience was silent; she was entirely absorbed in her own act, and in the prospects of the other two.

CHAPTER XVI

When David reached home that night he found a French letter awaiting him. It was from Louie, still dated from the country town near Toulouse, and announced the birth of her child—a daughter. The letter was scrawled apparently from her bed, and contained some passionate, abusive remarks about her husband, half finished, and hardly intelligible. She peremptorily called on David to send her some money at once. Her husband was a sot, and unfaithful to her. Even now with his first child, he had taken advantage of her being laid up to make love to other women. All the town cried shame on him. The priest visited her frequently, and was all on her side.

Then at the end she wrote a hasty description of the child. Its eyes were like his, David's, but it would have much handsomer eyelashes. It was by far the best-looking child in the place, and because everybody remarked on its likeness to her, she believed Montjoie had taken a dislike to it. She didn't care, but it made him look ridiculous. Why didn't he do some work, instead of letting her and her child live like pigs? He could get some, if his dirty pride would let him. It wasn't to be supposed, with this disgusting Commune going on in Paris, and everybody nearly ruined, that anyone would want statues—they had never even sold the Mænad—but somebody had wanted him to do a monument, cheap, the other day for a brother who had been killed in the war; and he wouldn't. He was too fine. That was like him all over.

It was as though he could hear her flinging out the reckless sentences. But he thought there were signs that she was pleased with the baby—and he suddenly remembered her tyrannous passion for the Mason child.

As to the money, he looked carefully into his accounts. For the last six months he had been gathering every possible saving together with a view to the History of Manchester, which he and John had planned to begin printing in the coming autumn. It went against him sorely to take from such a hoard for the purpose of helping Jules Montjoie to an idler and easier existence. The fate of his six hundred pounds burnt deep into a mind which at bottom was well furnished with all the old Yorkshire and Scotch frugality.

However, he sent his sister money, and he gave up in thought that fortnight's walking tour in the Lakes he had planned for his holiday. He must just stay at home and see to business.

Then next morning, as it happened, he woke up with a sudden hunger for the country—a vision before his eyes of the wide bosom of the Scout, of fresh airs and hurrying waters, of the sheep among the heather. His night had been restless; the whole of life seemed to be again in debate—Lucy's figure, Dora's talk,

chased and tormented him. Away to the April moorland! He sprang out of bed determined to take the first train to Clough End. He had not been out of Manchester for months, and it was luckily a Saturday. Here was this letter of Louie's too—he owed the news to Uncle Reuben. Since Reuben's visit to Manchester, a year before, there had been no communication between him and them. Six years! How would the farm—how would Aunt Hannah look? There was a drawing in him this morning towards the past, towards even the harsh forms and memories of it, such as often marks a time of emotion and crisis, the moment before a man takes a half-reluctant step towards a doubtful future.

But as he journeyed towards the Derbyshire border, he was not in truth thinking of Dora's counsels or of Lucy Purcell at all. Every now and then he lost himself in the mere intoxication of the spring, in the charm of the factory valleys, just flushing into green, through which the train was speeding. But in general his attention was held by the book in his hand. His time for reading had been much curtailed of late by the toils of his business. He caught covetously at every spare hour.

The book was Bishop Berkeley's 'Dialogues.'

With what a medley of thoughts and interests had he been concerned during the last four or five months! His old tastes and passions had revived as we have seen, but unequally, with morbid gaps and exceptions. In these days he had hardly opened a poet or a novelist. His whole being shrank from them, as though it had been one wound, and the books which had been to him the passionate friends of his most golden hours, which had moulded in him, as it were, the soul wherewith he had loved Elise, looked to him now like enemies as he passed them quickly by upon the shelves.

But some of his old studies—German, Greek, science especially—were the saving of him. Among some foreign books, for instance, which he had ordered for a customer he came upon a copy of some scientific essays by Littré. Among them was a survey of the state of astronomical knowledge written somewhere about 1835, with all the luminous charm which the great Positivist had at command. David was captured by it, by the flight of the scientific imagination through time and space, amid suns, planets and nebulæ, the beginnings and the wrecks of worlds. When he laid it down with a sigh of pleasure, Ancrum, who was sitting opposite, looked up.

'You like your book, Davy?'

'Yes,' said the other slowly, staring out of the twilight window at the gloom which passes for sky in Manchester. Then with another long breath,—'It makes you a new heaven and a new earth!'

A similar impression, only even richer and more detailed, had been left upon him by a volume of Huxley's 'Lay Sermons.' The world of natural fact in its overpowering wealth and mystery was thus given back to him, as it were, under another aspect than

that torturing intoxicating aspect of art—one that fortified and calmed. All his scientific curiosities which had been so long laid to sleep revived. His first returning joy came from a sense of the inexhaustibleness and infinity of nature.

But very soon this renewed interest in science began to have the bearing and to issue in the mental activities which, all unknown to himself, had been from the beginning in his destiny. He could not now read it for itself alone. That new ethical and spiritual susceptibility, into which agony and loss had become slowly transformed, dominated and absorbed all else. For some time, beside his scientific books, there lay others from a class not hitherto very congenial to him, that which contains the great examples in our day, outside the poets, of the poetical or imaginative treatment of ethics—Emerson, Carlyle, Ruskin. At an age when most young minds of intelligence amongst us are first seized by these English masters, he had been wandering in French paths. 'Sartor Resartus,' Emerson's 'Essays,' 'The Seven Lamps,' came to him now with an indescribable freshness and force. Nay, a too great force! We enjoy the great prophets of literature most when we have not yet lived enough to realise all they tell us. When David, wandering at night with Teufelsdröckh through heaven and hell, felt at last the hard sobs rising in his throat, he suddenly put the book and others akin to it away from him. As with the poets so here. He must turn to something less eloquent—to paths of thought where truth shone with a drier and a calmer light.

But still the same problems! Since his Eden gates had closed upon him, he had been in the outer desert where man has wandered from the beginning, threatened with all the familiar phantoms, illusions, mist-voices of human thought. What was consciousness—knowledge—law? Was there any law—any knowledge—any *I*?

Naturally he had long ceased to find any final sustenance or pleasure in the Secularist literature, which had once convinced him so easily. Secularism up to a certain point, it began to seem to him, was a commonplace; beyond that point, a contradiction. If the race should ever take the counsel of the Secularists, or of that larger Positivist thought, of which English secularism is the popular reflection, the human intellect would be a poorer instrument with a narrower swing. So much was plain to him. For nothing can be more certain than that some of the finest powers and noblest work of the human mind have been developed by the struggle to know what the Secularist declares is neither knowable nor worth knowing.

Yet the histories of philosophy which he began to turn over were in truth no more fruitful to him than the talk of the *Reasoner*. They stimulated his powers of apprehension and analysis; and the great march of human debate from century to century touched his imagination. But in these summaries of the philosophical field his inmost life appropriated nothing. Once by

a sort of reaction he fell upon Hume again, pining for the old intellectual clearness of impression, though it were a clearness of limit and negation. But he had hardly begun the 'Treatise' or the 'Essays' before his soul rose against them, crying for he knew not what, only that it was for nothing they could give.

Then by chance a little Life of Berkeley, and upon it an old edition of the works, fell into his hands. As he was turning over the leaves, the 'Alciphron' so struck him that he turned to the first page of the first volume, and evening after evening read the whole through with a devouring energy that never flagged. When it was over he was a different being. The mind had crystallised afresh.

It was his first serious grapple with the fundamental problems of knowledge. And, to a nature which had been so tossed and bruised in the great unregarding tide of things, which had felt itself the mere chattel of a callous universe, of no account or dignity either to gods or men, what strange exaltation there was in the general *suggestion* of Berkeley's thought! The mind, the source of all that is; the impressions on the senses, merely the speech of the Eternal Mind to ours, a Visual Language, whereof man's understanding is perpetually advancing, which has been indeed contrived for his education; man, naturally immortal, king of himself and of the senses, inalienably one—if he would but open his eyes and see—with all that is Divine, true, eternal: the soul that had been crushed by grief and self-contempt revived at the mere touch of these vast possibilities like a trampled plant. Not that it absorbed them yet, made them its own; but they made a healing stimulating atmosphere in which it seemed once more possible for it to grow into a true manhood. The spiritual hypothesis of things was for the first time presented in such a way as to take imaginative hold without exciting or harrowing the feelings; he saw the world reversed, in a pure light of thought, as Berkeley saw it, and all the horizon of things fell back.

Now—on this April afternoon—as the neighbourhood of Manchester was left behind, as the long woodclad valleys and unpolluted streams began to prophesy of Derbyshire and the Peak, David, his face pressed against the window, fell into a dream with Berkeley and with nature. Oh for knowledge! for verification! He began dimly and passionately to see before him a life devoted to thought—a life in which science after science should become the docile instrument of a mind still pressing on and on into the shadowy realm, till, in Berkeley's language, the darkness part, and it 'recover the lost region of light'!

But in the very midst of this overwhelming vision he said suddenly to himself:

'There is another way—another answer—Dora's way and Ancrum's.'

Aye, the way of faith, which asks for no length of years in which to win the goal, which is there at once—in the beat of a

wing—safe on the breast of God! He thought of it as he had seen it illustrated in his friend and in Dora, with the mixture of attraction and repulsion which, in this connection, was now more or less habitual to him. The more he saw of Dora, the more he wondered—at her goodness and her ignorance. Her positive dislike to, and alienation from knowledge was amazing. At the first indication of certain currents of thought he could see her soul shrivelling and shrinking like a green leaf near flame. As he had gradually realised, she had with some difficulty forgiven him the attempt to cure Daddy's drinking through a doctor; that anyone should think sin could be reached by medicine—it was in effect to throw doubt on the necessity of God's grace! And she could not bear that he should give her information from the books he read about the Bible or early Christianity. His detached, though never hostile, tone was clearly intolerable to her. She could not and would not suffer it, would take any means of escaping it.

Then that Passion-week sermon she had taken him to hear; which had so moved her, with which she had so sweetly and persistently assumed his sympathy! The preacher had been a High Church Canon with a considerable reputation for eloquence. The one o'clock service had been crowded with business and professional men. David had never witnessed a more tempting opportunity. But how hollow and empty the whole result! What foolish sentimental emphasis, what unreality, what contempt for knowledge, yet what a show of it!—an elegant worthless jumble of Gibbon, Horace, St. Augustine, Wesley, Newman and Mill, mixed with the cheap picturesque—with moonlight on the Campagna, and sunset on Niagara—and leading, by the loosest rhetoric, to the most confident conclusions. He had the taste of it in his mouth still. Fresh from the wrestle of mind into which Berkeley had led him, he fell into a new and young indignation with sermon and preacher.

Yet, all the same, if you asked how man could best *live*, apart from thinking, how the soul could put its foot on the brute—where would Dora stand then? What if the true key to life lay not in knowledge, but in *will?* What if knowledge in the true sense was ultimately impossible to man, and if Christianity not only offered, but could give him the one thing truly needful—his own will, regenerate?

But with the first sight of the Clough End streets these high debates were shaken from the mind.

He ran up the Kinder road, with its villanous paving of cobbles and coal dust, its mills to the right, down below in the hollow, skirting the course of the river, and its rows of workmen's homes to the left climbing the hill—in a tremor of excitement. Six years! Would anyone recognize him? Ah! there was Jerry's 'public,' an evil-looking weather-stained hole; but another name swung on the sign; poor Jerry!—was he, too, gone the way of

orthodox and sceptic alike? And here was the Foundry—David could hardly prevent himself from marching into the yard littered with mysterious odds and ends of old iron which had been the treasure house of his childhood. But no Tom—and no familiar face anywhere.

Yes!—there was the shoemaker's cottage, where the prayer-meeting had been, and there, on the threshold, looking at the approaching figure, stood the shoemaker's wife, the strange woman with the mystical eyes. David greeted her as he came near. She stared at him from under a bony hand put up against the sun, but did not apparently recognise him; he, seized with sudden shyness, quickened his pace, and was soon out of her sight.

In a minute or two he was at the Dye-works, which mark the limit of the town, and the opening of the valley road. Every breath now was delight. The steep wooded hills to the left, the red-brown shoulder of the Scout in front, were still wrapt in torn and floating shreds of mist. But the sun was everywhere—above in the slowly triumphing blue, in the mist itself, and below, on the river and the fields. The great wood climbing to his left was all embroidered on the brown with palms and catkins, or broken with patches of greening larch, which had a faintly luminous relief amid the rest. And the dash of the river—and the scents of the fields! He leapt the wall of the lane, and ran down to the water's edge, watching a dipper among the stones in a passion of pleasure which had no words.

Then up and on again, through the rough uneven lane, higher and higher into the breast of the Scout. What if he met Jim Wigson on the way? What if Aunt Hannah, still unreconciled, turned him from the door? No matter! Rancour and grief have no hold on mortals walking in such an April world—in such an exquisite and sunlit beauty. On! let thought and nature be enough! Why complicate and cumber life with relations that do but give a foothold to pain, and offer less than they threaten?

There is smoke rising from Wigson's, and figures moving in the yard. Caution!—keep close under the wall. And here at last is Needham farm, at the top of its own steep pitch, with the sycamore trees in the lane beside it, the Red Brook sweeping round it to the right, the rough gate below, the purple Scout mist-wreathed behind. There are cows lowing in the yard, a horse grazes in the front field; through the little garden gate a gleam of sun strikes on the struggling crocuses and daffodils which come up year after year, no man heeding them; there is a clucking of hens, a hurry of water, a flood of song from a lark poised above the field. The blue smoke rises into the misty air; the sun and the spring caress the rugged lonely place.

With a beating heart David opened the gate into the field, walked round the little garden, let himself into the yard, and with a hasty glance at the windows mounted the steps and knocked.

No answer. He knocked again. Surely Aunt Hannah must be about somewhere. Eleven o'clock; how quiet the house was!

This time there was a clatter of a chair on a flagged floor inside, and a person with a slow laboured step came and opened.

It was Reuben. He adjusted his spectacles with difficulty, and stared at the intruder.

'Uncle Reuben!—I thought it was such a fine day, I'd just run over and see the old place, and bring you some news,' said David, smiling and holding out his hand.

Reuben took it, stupefied. 'Davy,' he said, trembling. Then with a sudden movement he whipped the door to behind him, and shut it close.

'Whist!' he said, putting his old finger to his lip. 'T' servant's just settlin her i' t' kitchen. She's noa ready yet—she's been terr'ble bad th' neet. Coom yo here.' And he descended the steps with infinite care, and led David to the wood-shed.

'Is Aunt Hannah ill?' asked David, astonished.

Reuben leant against the wall of the shed, and took off his spectacles, as though to wipe them with his old and shaking hands. Then David saw a sort of convulsion pass across his ungainly face.

'Aye,' he said, looking down, 'aye, she's broken is Hannah. Yo didna knaw?'

'I've heard nothing.'

Reuben recounted the facts. Since her stroke of last spring, and the partial recovery which had followed upon it, there had been little apparent change, except perhaps in the direction of slowly increasing weakness. She was a wreck, and likely to remain so. Hardly anybody but Reuben could understand her now, and she rarely let him out of her sight. He could not get time to attend to the farm, was obliged to leave things to the hired man, and was in trouble often about his affairs.

'Bit yo see, she hasna t' reet use of her speäch,' he said, excusing himself humbly to this handsome city nephew. 'An' she conno gie ower snipin aw at onst. 'Twudna be human natur'. An' t' gell's worritin' an' I mun tell her what t' missis says.'

David asked if he might see her, or should he just turn back to the town? Reuben protested, his hospitality and family feeling aroused, his poor mind torn with conflicting motives.

'I believe she'd fratch if she didna see tha,' he said at last. 'A'll just goo ben, and ask.'

He went in, and David remained in the wood-shed, staring out at the familiar scene, at Louie's window, at the steps where he and she had fed the fowls together.

The door opened again, and Reuben reappeared on the steps, agitated and beckoning.

David went in, stepping softly, holding his blue cloth cap in his hand. In another instant he stood beside the old cushioned seat in the kitchen, looking down at Hannah.

This Hannah! this his childhood's enemy! this shawled and shrunken figure with the white parchment face and lantern cheeks!

He stooped to her and said something about why he had come. Reuben listened wondering.

'Louie's married and got a babby—dosto hear, Hannah? And he—t' lad—did yo iver see sich a yan for growin?'

He wished to be mildly jocular. Hannah's face did not move. She had just touched her nephew with her cold wasted hand. Now she beckoned to him to sit down at her right. He did so, and then for the first time he could believe that Hannah, the old Hannah, was there beside them. For as she slowly studied his dress, the Inverness cape then as now a favourite garb in Manchester, the hand holding the cap, refined since she saw it last by commerce with books and pens rather than hurdles and sheep, the broad shoulders, the dark head, her eye for the first time met his, full, and a weird thrill went through him. For that eye—dulled, and wavering—was still Hannah. The old hate was in it, the old grudge, all that had been at least for him and Louie the inmost and characteristic soul of their tyrant. He knew in an instant that she had in her mind the money of which he and his sister had robbed her, and beyond that the offences of their childhood, the infamy of their mother. If she could, she would have hurled them all upon him. As it was, she was silent, but that brooding eye, like a smouldering spark in her blanched face, spoke for her.

Reuben tried to talk. But a weight lay on him and David. The gaunt head in the coarse white nightcap turned now to one, now to the other, pursued them phantom-like. Presently he insisted that his nephew must dine, avoiding Hannah's look. David would much rather have gone without; but Reuben, affecting joviality, called the servant, and some food was brought. No attempt was made to include Hannah in the meal. David supposed that it was now necessary to feed her.

Reuben talked disjointedly of the neighbours and his stock, and asked a few questions, without listening to the answers, about David's affairs, and Louie's marriage. In Hannah's presence his poor dull wits were not his own; he could in truth think of nothing but her.

After the meal, however, when a draught of ale had put some heart in him, he got up with an air of resolution.

'I mun goo and see what that felly's been doin' wi' th' Huddersfield beëasts,' he said; 'wilta coom wi' me, Davy? Mary!'

He called the little maid. Hannah suddenly said something incoherent which David could not understand. Reuben affected not to hear.

'Mary, gie your mistress her dinner, like a good gell. An' keep t' house-door open, soa 'at she can knock wi' t' stick if she wants owt.'

He stood before her restless and ashamed, afraid to look at

her. Then he suddenly stooped and kissed her on the forehead. David felt a lump in his throat. As he took leave of her the spell, as it were, of Reuben's piteous affection came upon him. He saw nothing but a dying and emaciated woman, and taking her hand in his, he said some kind natural words.

The hand dropped from his like a stone. As he stood at the door behind Reuben, the servant came forward with a plate of something which she put down inside the fender. As she did so, she awkwardly upset the fire-irons, which fell with a crash. Hannah started upright in her chair, with a rush of half-articulate words, grasping fiercely for her stick with glaring eyes. The servant, a wild moorland lass, fled terrified, and at the 'house' door turned and made a face at David.

Outside Reuben slowly mastered himself, and woke up to some real interest in Louie's doings. David told him her story frankly, so far as it could be separated from his own, and, pressed by Reuben's questions, even revealed at last the matter of the six hundred pounds. Reuben could not get over it. Sandy's 'six hunderd pund' which he had earned with the sweat of his brow, all handed over to that minx Louie, and wasted by her and a rascally French husband in a few months—it was more than he could bear.

'Aye, aye, marryin's varra weel,' he said impatiently. 'A grant tha it's a great sin coomin thegither without marryin. But Sandy's six hunderd pund! Noa, I conno abide sich wark.'

And he fell into sombre silence, out of which David could hardly rouse him. Except that he said once, 'And we that had kep' it so long. I'd better never ha gien it tha.' And clearly that was the bitter thought in his mind. The sacrifice that had taxed all his moral power, and, as he believed, brought physical ruin on Hannah, had been for nothing, or worse than nothing. Neither he nor David nor anyone was the better for it.

'I must go over the shoulder to Frimley,' said David at last. They had made a half-hearted inspection of the stock in the home fields, and were now passing through the gate on to the moor. 'I must see Margaret Dawson again before I take the train back.'

Reuben looked astonished and shook his head as though he did not remember anything about Margaret Dawson. He walked on beside his nephew for a while in silence. The Red Brook was leaping and dancing beside them, the mountain ashes were just bursting into leaf, the old smithy was ahead of them on the heathery slope, and to their left the Downfall, full and white, thundered over its yellow rocks.

But they had hardly crossed the Red Brook to mount the peak beyond when Reuben drew up.

'Noa'—he said restlessly—'noa. I mun goo back. T' gell's flighty and theer's aw maks o' mischief i' yoong things.' He stood and held his nephew by the hand, looking at him long and wistfully. As he did so a calmer expression stole for an instant into the poor troubled eyes.

'Very like a'st not see tha again, Davie. We niver know.

Livin's hard soomtimes—soa's deein, folks say. I'm often freet'nt of deein'—but I should na be. Theer's noan so mich peace here, and we *knaw* that wi' the Lord theer's peace.'

He gave a long sigh—all his character was in it—so tortured was it and hesitating.

They parted, and the young man climbed the hill, looking back often to watch the bent figure on the lower path. The spell had somehow vanished from the sunshine, the thrill from the moorland air. Life was once more cruel, implacable.

He walked fast to Frimley, and made for the cottage of Margaret's brother. He remembered its position of old.

A woman was washing in the 'house' or outer kitchen. She received him graciously. The weekly money which in one way or another he had never failed to pay since he first undertook it, had made him well known to her and her husband. With a temper quite unlike that of the characteristic northerner, she showed no squeamishness at all about the matter. If it hadn't been for his help, they would just have sent Margaret to the workhouse, she said bluntly ; for they had many mouths to feed, and couldn't have burdened themselves with an extra one. She was quite 'silly' and often troublesome.

'Is she here ?' David asked.

'Aye, if yo goo ben, yo'll find her,' said the woman, carelessly pointing to an inner door. 'I conno ha her in here washin days, nor the children noather.'

David opened the door pointed out to him. He found himself in a rough weaving shed almost filled by a large hand-loom, with its forest of woodwork rising to the ceiling, its rolls of perforated pattern-paper, its great cylinders below, and many-coloured shuttles to either hand. But to-day it stood idle, the weaver was not at work. The room was stuffy but cold, and inexpressibly gloomy in this silence of the loom.

Where was Margaret ? After a minute's search, there, beyond the loom, sitting by a fireless grate, was a little figure in a bedgown and nightcap, poking with a stick amid the embers, and as it seemed crooning to itself.

David made his way up to her, inexpressibly moved.

'Margaret !'

She did not know him in the least. She had a starved-looking cat on her lap, which she was huddling against her breast. The face had fallen away almost to nothing, so small and thin it was. She was dirty and unkempt. Her still brown hair, once so daintily neat, straggled out beneath her torn cap ; her print bed-gown was pinned across her, her linsey skirt was in holes ; everywhere the same tale of age neglected and unloved.

When David first stood before her she drew back with a terrified look, still clutching the cat tightly. But, as he smiled at her, with the tears in his eyes, speaking her name tenderly, her frightened look relaxed, and she remained staring at him with the shrinking furtive expression of a quite young child.

He knelt down beside her.

'Margaret—dear Margaret—don't you know me?'

She did not answer, but her wrinkled eyes, still blue and vaguely sweet, wavered under his, and it seemed to him that every now and then a shiver of cold ran through her old and frail body. He went on gently, trying to recall her wandering senses. In vain. In the middle she interrupted him with a piteous lip.

'They promised me a ribbon for 't,' she said, complainingly, in a hoarse, bronchitic voice, pointing to the animal she held, and to its lean neck adorned with a collar of plaited string, on which apparently she had just been busy, to judge from the odds and ends of string lying about.

At the same moment David became aware of a couple of children craning their heads round the corner of the loom to look, a loutish boy about eleven, and a girl rather younger. At sight of them, Margaret raised a cry of distress and alarm, with that helpless indefinable note in the voice which shows that personality, in the true sense, is no longer there.

'Go away!' David commanded.

The children did not stir, but grinned. He made a threatening movement. Then the boy, as quick as lightning, put his tongue out at Margaret, and caught hold of his sister, and they clattered off, their mother in the next room scolding them out into the street again.

And this the end of a creature all sacrifice, a life all affection!

He took her shivering hand in his.

'Margaret, listen to me. You shall be better looked after. I will see to that. No one shall be unkind to you any more. If they won't do it here, my—my—wife shall take care of you!'

He lifted her hand and kissed it, putting all the pity and bitter indignation of his heart into the action. Margaret, seeing his emotion, whimpered too; otherwise she was impassive.

He left her, went into the next room, and had a long energetic talk with Margaret's sister-in-law. The woman, half ashamed, half recalcitrant, in the end promised amendment. What business it was of his she could not imagine; but the small weekly addition which he offered to make to Margaret's payments, while it showed him a greater fool than before, made it impossible to put his meddling aside. She promised that Margaret should be brought into the warm, that she should have better clothes, and that the children should be kept from plaguing her.

Then he departed, and mounting the moor again, spent an hour or two wandering among the boggy fissures of the top, or sitting on the high edges of the heather, looking down over the dark and craggy splendour of the hill immediately around and beneath him, on and away through innumerable paling shades of distance to the blue Welsh border. His speculative fervour was all gone. Reuben, Hannah, Margaret, these figures of suffering and pain had brought him close to earth again. The longing for

a human hand in his, for a home, wife, children to spend himself upon, to put at least for a while between him and this unconquerable 'something which infects the world,' became in this long afternoon a physical pain not to be resisted. He thought more and more steadily of Lucy, schooling himself, idealising her.

It was the Sunday before Whitsunday. David was standing outside a trim six-roomed house in the upper part of the little Lancashire town of Wakely, waiting for Lucy Purcell.

She came at last, flushed and discomposed, pulling the door hastily to behind her.

They walked on a short distance, talking disconnectedly of the weather, the mud, and the way on to the moor, till she said suddenly:

'I wish people wouldn't be so good and so troublesome!'

'Did Robert wish to keep you at home?' inquired David, laughing.

'Well, he didn't want me to come out with—anybody but him,' she said, flushing. 'And it's so bad, because one can't be cross. I don't know how it is, but they're just the best people here that ever walked!'

She looked up at him seriously, an unusual energy in her slight face.

'What!—a town of saints?' asked David, mocking. It was so difficult to take Lucy seriously.

She tossed her head and insisted.

Talking very fast, and not very consecutively, she gave him an account, so far as she was able, of the life lived in this little town, a typical Lancashire town of the smaller and more homogeneous kind. All the people worked in two large spinning mills, or in a few smaller factories representing dependent industries, such as reed-making. Their work was pleasant to them. Lucy complained, with the natural resentment of the idle who see their place in the world jeopardised by the superfluous energy of the workers, that she could never get the mill girls to say that the mill hours were too long. The heat tried them, made appetites delicate, and lung mischief common. But the only thing which really troubled them was 'half-time.' Socially everybody knew everybody. They were passionately interested in each other's lives and in the town's affairs. And their religion, of a strong Protestant type expressed in various forms of Dissent, formed an ideal bond which kept the little society together, and made an authority which all acknowledged, an atmosphere in which all moved.

The picture she drew was, in truth, the picture of one of those social facts on which perhaps the future of England depends. She drew it girlishly, quite unconscious of its large bearings, gossiping about this person and that, with a free expenditure of very dogmatic opinion on the habits and ways which were not hers. But, on the whole, the picture emerged, and David had

never liked her talk so well. The little self-centred thing had somehow been made to wonder and admire; which is much for all of us.

And she, meanwhile, was instantly sensible that she was in a happy vein, that she pleased. Her eyes danced under her pretty spring hat. How proud she was to walk with him—that he had come all this way to see her! As she shyly glanced him up and down, she would have liked the village street to be full of gazers, and was almost loth to leave the public way for the loneliness of the moor. What other girl in Wakely had the prospect of such a young man to take her out? Oh! would he ever, ever 'ask her'—would he even come again?

At last, after a steep and muddy climb, through uninviting back ways, they were out upon the moor. An apology for a moor in David's eyes! For the hills which surround the valley of the Irwell, in which Wakely lies, are, for the most part, green and rolling ground, heatherless and cragless. Still, from the top they looked over a wide and wind-blown scene, the bolder moors of Rochdale behind them, and in front the long green basin in which the Irwell rises. Along the valley bottoms lay the mills, with their surrounding rows of small stone houses. Up on the backs of the moors crouched the old farms, which have watched the mills come, and will perhaps see them go; and here and there a grim-looking colliery marked a fold of the hill. The landscape on a spring day has a bracing bareness, which is not without exhilaration. The wind blows freshly, the sun lies broadly on the hills. England, on the whole at her busiest and best, spreads before you.

They were still on the top when it occurred to them that they had a long walk in prospect—for they talked of getting to the source of the Irwell—and that it was dinner-time. So they sat down under one of the mortarless stone walls which streak the moors, and David brought out the meal that was in his pockets. They ate with laughter and chat. Pigeons passed overhead, going and coming from an old farm about a hundred yards away; the sky above them had a lark for voice singing his loudest; and in the next field a peewit was wheeling and crying. The few trees in sight were struggling fast into leaf. Nature even in this cold north was gay to-day and young.

Suddenly, in the midst of their meal, by a natural caprice and reaction of the mind, as David sat looking down on slate roofs and bare winding valley, across the pale, rain-beaten grass of the moor, all the northern English detail vanished from his eyes. For one suffocating instant he saw nothing but a great picture gallery, its dimly storied walls and polished floor receding into the distance. In front Velazquez' 'Infanta,' and before it a figure bent over a canvas. Every line and tint stood out. He heard the light varying voice, caught the complex grace of the woman, the strenuous effort of the artist.

Enough! He closed his eyes for one bitter instant; then raised them again to England and to Lucy.

There under the wall, while they were still lingering in the sun, he asked Lucy Purcell to be his wife. And Lucy, hardly believing her own foolish ears, and in a whirl of bliss and exultation past expression, nevertheless put on a few maidenly airs and graces, coquetted a little, would not be kissed all at once, talked of her father and the war that must be faced, and finally surrendered, held up her scarlet cheek for her lord's caress, and then sat speechless, hand in hand with him.

But Nature had its way. They rambled on, crossing the stone stiles which link the bare green fields on the side of the moor. When a stile appeared, Lucy would send him on in front, so that she might mount decorously, and then descend trembling upon his hand.

Presently they came to a spot where the path crossed a little streamlet, and then climbed a few rough steps in a steep bank, and so across a stile at the top.

David ran up, leapt the stile, and waited. But he had time to study the distant course of their walk, as well as the burnt and lime-strewn grass about him, for no Lucy appeared. He leant over the wall, and to his amazement saw her sitting on one of the stone steps below, crying.

He was beside her in an instant. But he could not loosen the hands clasped over her eyes.

'Oh, why did you do it?—why did you do it? I'm not good enough—I never shall be good enough!'

For the first time since their formal kiss he put his arms round her. And as she, at last forced to look up, found herself close to the face which, in its dark refinement and power, seemed to her to-day so far, so wildly above her deserts, she saw it all quivering and changed. Never had little Lucy risen to such a moment; never again, perhaps, could she so rise. But in that instant of passionate humility she had dropped healing and life into a human heart.

Yet, was it Lucy he kissed?—Lucy he gathered in his arms? Or was it not rather Love itself?—the love he had sought, had missed, but must still seek—and seek?

BOOK IV

MATURITY

CHAPTER I

'DADDY!' said a little voice.

The owner of it, a child of four, had pushed open a glass door, and was craning his curly head through it towards a garden that lay beyond.

'Yes, you rascal, what do you want now?'

'Daddy, come here!'

The voice had a certain quick stealthiness, through which, however, a little tremor of apprehension might be detected.

David Grieve, who was smoking and reading in the garden, came up to where his small son stood, and surveyed him.

'Sandy, you've been getting into mischief.'

The child laid hold of his father, dragged him into the little hall, and towards the dining-room door. Arrived there, he stopped, put a finger to his lip, and laid his head plaintively on one side.

'Zere's an *aw*ful sight in zere, Daddy.'

'You monkey, what have you been up to?'

David opened the door. Sandy first hung back, then, in a sudden enthusiasm, ran in, and pointed a thumb pink with much sucking at the still uncleared dinner-table, which David and the child's mother had left half an hour before.

'Zere's a pie!' he said, exultantly.

And a pie there was. First, all the salt-cellars had been upset into the middle of the table, then the bits of bread left beside the plates had been crumbled in, then—the joys of wickedness growing—the mustard-pot had been emptied over the heap, some bananas had been stuck unsteadily here and there to give it feature, and finally, in a last orgie of crime, a cruet of vinegar had been discharged on the whole, and the brown streams were now meandering across the clean tablecloth.

'Sandy, you little wretch!' cried his father, 'don't you know that you have been told again and again not to touch the things on the table? Hold out your hand!'

Sandy held out a small paw, whimpered beforehand, but never ceased all the time to watch his father with eyes which seemed to be quietly on the watch for experiences.

David administered two smart pats, then rang the bell for the housemaid. Sandy stationed himself on the rug opposite his father, and looked at his reddened hand, considering.

'I don't seem to mind much, Daddy!' he said at last, looking up.

'No, sir. Daddy 'll have to try and find something that you *will* mind.'

The tone was severe, and David did his best to frown. In reality his eyes, under the frown, devoured his small son, and he had some difficulty in restraining himself from kissing the hand he had just slapped.

When the housemaid entered, however, she showed a temper which would clearly have slapped Master Sandy without the smallest compunction.

The little fellow stood and listened to her laments and denunciations with the same grave considering eyes, slipped his hand inside his father's for protection, watched, like one enchained, the gradual demolition of the pie, and when it was all gone, and the tablecloth removed, he gave a long sigh of relief.

'Say you're sorry, sir, to Jane, for giving her so much extra trouble,' commanded his father.

'I'm soddy, Jane,' said the child, nodding to her; 'but it was a p—*wecious* pie, wasn't it?'

The mixture of humour and candour in his baby eye was irresistible. Even Jane laughed, and David took him up and swung him on to his shoulder.

'Come out, young man, into the garden, where I can keep an eye on you. Oh! by the way, are you all right again?'

This inquiry was uttered as they reached the garden seat, and David perched the child on his knee.

'Yes, I'm *bet*—ter,' said the child slowly, evidently unwilling to relinquish the dignity of illness all in a moment.

'Well, what was the matter with you that you gave poor mammy such a bad night?'

The child was silent a moment, pondering how to express himself.

'I was—I was a little sick outside, and a little *feelish* inside'—he wavered on the difficult word. 'Mammy said I had the wrong dinner yesterday at Aunt Dora's. Zere was plums—*lots* o' plums!' said the child, clasping his hands on his knee, and hunching himself up in a sudden ecstasy.

'Well, don't go and have the wrong dinner again at Aunt Dora's. I must tell her to give you nothing but rice pudding.'

'Zen I shan't go zere any more,' said the child with determination.

'What, you love plums more than Aunt Dora?'

'No—o,' said Sandy dubiously, 'but plums *is* good!'

And, with a sigh of reminiscence, he threw himself back in his father's arm, being, in fact, tired after his bad night and the further excitement of the 'pie.' The thumb slipped into the pink mouth, and with the other hand the child began dreamily to pull at one of his fair curls. The attitude meant going to sleep, and David had, in fact, hardly settled him, and drawn a light overcoat which lay near over his small legs, before the fringed eyelids sank.

David held him tenderly, delighting in the weight, the warmth, the soft even breath of his sleeping son. He managed somehow

to relight his pipe, and then sat on, dreamily content, enjoying the warm September sunshine, and letting the book he had brought out lie unopened.

The garden in which he sat was an oblong piece of ground, with a central grass plat and some starved and meagre borders on either hand. The gravel in the paths had blackened, so had the leaves of the privets and the lilacs, so also had the red-brick walls of the low homely house closing up the other end of the garden. Seventy years ago this house had stood pleasantly amid fields on the northern side of Manchester; its shrubs had been luxuriant, its roses unstained. Now on every side new houses in oblong gardens had sprung up, and the hideous smoke plague of Manchester had descended on the whole district, withering and destroying.

Yet David had a great affection for his house, and it deserved it. It had been built in the days when there was more elbow-room in the world than now. The three sitting-rooms on the ground floor opened sociably into each other, and were pleasantly spacious, and the one story of bedrooms above contained, at any rate in the eyes of the tenants of the house, a surprising amount of accommodation. When all was said, however, it remained, no doubt, a very modest dwelling, at a rent of somewhere about ninety pounds a year; but as David sat contemplating it this afternoon, there rose in him again the astonishment with which he had first entered upon it, astonishment that he, David Grieve, should ever have been able to attain to it.

'Sandy! come here directly! Where are you, sir?'

David heard the voice calling in the hall, and raised his own.

'Lucy! all right!—he's here.'

The glass door opened, and Lucy came out. She was very smartly arrayed in a new blue dress which she had donned since dinner; yet her looks were cross and tired.

'Oh, David, how stupid! Why isn't the child dressed? Just look what an object! I sent Lizzie for him ten minutes ago, and she couldn't find him.'

'Then Lizzie has even less brains than I supposed,' said David composedly, 'seeing that she had only to look out of a back window. What are you going to do with him?'

'Take him out with me, of course. There are the Watsons of Fallowfield, they pestered me to bring him, and they're at home Saturdays. And aren't you coming too?'

'Madam, you are unreasonable!' said David, smiling, and putting down his pipe he laid an affectionate hand on his wife's arm. 'I went careering about the world with you last Saturday and the Saturday before, and this week end I must take for reading. There is an Oxford man who has been writing me infuriated letters this week because I won't let him know whether we will take up his pamphlet or no. I must get that read, and a good many other things, before to-morrow night.'

'Oh, I know!' said Lucy, pettishly. 'There's always some-

thing in the way of what I want. Soon I shan't see anything of you at all; it will be all business, and yet not a penny more to spend! Well, then, give me Sandy.'

David hesitated.

'Do you think you'll take him?' he said, bending over the little fellow. 'He doesn't look a bit himself to-day. It's those abominable plums of Dora's!'

He spoke with fierceness, as though Dora had been the veriest criminal.

'Well, but what nonsense!' cried Lucy; 'they don't upset other children. I can't think what's wrong with him.'

'He isn't like other children; he's of a finer make,' said David, laughing at his own folly, but more than half sincere in it all the same.

Lucy laughed too, and was appeased. She bent down to look at him, confessed that he was pale, and that she had better not take him lest there should be catastrophes.

'Well, then, I must go alone,' she said, turning away discontentedly. 'I don't know what's the good of it. Nobody cares to see me without him or you.'

The last sentence came out with a sudden energy, and as she looked back towards him he saw that her cheek was flushed.

'What, in that new gown?' he said, smiling, and looked her up and down approvingly.

Her expression brightened.

'Do you like it?' she said, more graciously.

'Very much. You look as young as when I first teased you! Come here and let me give you a "nip for new."'

She came docilely. He pretended to pinch the thin wrist she held out to him, and then, stooping, lightly kissed it.

'Now go and enjoy yourself,' he said, 'and I'll take care of Sandy. Don't tire yourself. Take a cab when you want one.'

She was moving away when a thought struck her.

'What are you going to say to Lord Driffield?'

A cloud crossed David's look. 'Well, what am I to say to him? You don't really want to go, Lucy?'

In an instant the angry look came back.

'Oh, very well!' she cried. 'If you're ashamed of me, and don't care to take me about with you, just say it, that's all!'

'As if I wanted to go myself!' he remonstrated. 'Why, I should be bored to death; so would you. I don't believe there would be a person in the house whom either of us would ever have seen before, except Lord Driffield. And I can see Lord Driffield, and his books too, in much more comfortable ways than by going to stay with him.'

Lucy stood silent a moment, trying to contain herself, then she broke out:

'That is just like you!' she said in a low bitter voice; 'you won't take any chance of getting on. It's always the way. People say to me that you're so clever—that you're thought so

much of in Manchester, you might be anything you like. And what's the good?—that's what I think! If you do earn more money you won't let us live any differently. It's always, can't we do without this? and can't we do without that? And as to knowing people, you won't take any trouble at all! Why can't we get on, and make new friends, and be—be—as good as anybody? other people do. I believe you think I should disgrace myself—I should put my knife in my mouth, or something, if you took me to Lord Driffield's. I can behave myself *perfectly*, thank you.'

And Lucy looked at her husband in a perfect storm of temper and resentment. Her prettiness had lost much of its first bloom; the cheek-bones, always too high, were now more prominent than in first youth, and the whole face had a restless thinness which robbed it of charm, save at certain rare moments of unusual moral or physical well-being. David, meeting his wife's sparkling eyes, felt a pang compounded of many mixed compunctions and misgivings.

'Look here, Lucy!' he said, laying down his pipe, and stretching out his free hand to her, 'don't say those things. They hurt me, and you don't mean them. Come and sit down a moment, and let's make up our minds about Lord Driffield.'

Unwillingly she let herself be drawn down beside him on the garden bench. These quarrels and reproaches were becoming a necessity and a pleasure to her. David felt, with a secret dread, that the habit of them had been growing upon her.

'I haven't done so very badly for you, have I?' he said affectionately, as she sat down, taking her two gloved hands in his one.

Lucy vehemently drew them away.

'Oh, if you mean to say,' she cried, her eyes flaming, 'that I had no money, and ought just to be thankful for what I can get, just *say it*, that's all.'

This time David flushed.

'I think, perhaps, you'd better go and pay your calls,' he said, after a minute; 'we can talk about this letter some other time.'

Lucy sat silent, her chest heaving. As soon as ever in these little scenes between them he began to show resentment, she began to give way.

'I didn't mean that,' she said, uncertainly, in a low voice, looking ready to cry.

'Well, then, suppose you don't say it,' replied David, after a pause. 'If you'll try and believe it, Lucy, I don't want to go to Lord Driffield's simply and solely because I am sure we should neither of us enjoy it. Lady Driffield is a stuck-up sort of person, who only cares about her own set and relations. We should be patronised, we should find it difficult to be ourselves—there would be no profit for anybody. Lord Driffield would be too busy to look after us; besides, he has more power anywhere than in his own house.'

'No one could patronise you,' said Lucy, firing up again.

'I don't know,' said David, with a smile and a stretch; 'I'm shy—on other people's domains. If they'd come here I should know how to deal with them.'

Lucy was silent for a while, twisting her mouth discontentedly. David observed her. Suddenly he held out his hand to her again, relenting.

'Do you really want to go so much, Lucy?'

'Of course I do,' she said, pouting, in a quick injured tone. 'It's—it's a chance, and I want to see what it's like; and I should hardly have to buy anything new, unless it's a new bonnet, and I can make that myself.'

David sat considering.

'Well!' he said at last, trying to stifle his sigh, 'I don't mind. I'll write and accept.'

Lucy's eye gleamed. She edged closer to her husband.

'You won't mind very much? It's only two nights. Isn't Sandy cramping your arm?'

'Oh, we shall get through, I dare say. No—the boy's all right. I *say*'—with a groan—'shall I have to get a new dress suit?'

'Yes, of *course*,' said Lucy, with indignant eagerness.

'Well, then, if you don't go off, and let me earn some money, we shall be in the Bankruptcy Court. Good-bye! I shall take the boy into the study, and cover him up while I work.'

Lucy stood before him an instant, then stooped and kissed him on the forehead. She would have liked to say a penitent word or two, but there was still something hard and hot in her heart which prevented her. Yet her husband, as he sat there, seemed to her the handsomest and most desirable of men.

David nodded to her kindly, and sat watching her slim straight figure as she tripped away from him across the garden and disappeared into the house. Then he bent over Sandy and raised him in his arms.

'Don't wake, Sandy!' he said softly, as the little man half opened his eyes—'Daddy's going to put you to bye in the study.'

And he carried him in, the child breathing heavily against his shoulder, and deposited his bundle on an old horsehair sofa in the corner of his own room, turning the little face away from the light, and wrapping up the bare legs.

Then he sat down to his work. The room in which he sat was made for work. It was walled with plain deal bookcases, which were filled from floor to ceiling, largely with foreign books, as the paper covers testified.

For the rest, anyone looking round would have noticed a spacious writing-table in the window, a large and battered armchair beside the fire, a photograph of Lucy over the mantelpiece, oddly flanked by an engraving of Goethe and the head of the German historian Ranke, a folding cane chair which was generally used by Lucy whenever she visited the room, and the horsehair sofa, whereon Sandy was now sleeping amid a surrounding litter of

books and papers which only just left room for his small person. If there were other chairs and tables, they were covered deep in literature of one kind or another, and did not count. The large window looked on the garden, and the room opened at the back into the drawing-room, and at one side into the dining-room. On the rug slept the short-haired black collie, whom David had once protected from Louie's dislike—old, blind, and decrepit, but still beloved, especially by Sandy, and still capable of barking a toothless defiance at the outer world.

It was a room to charm a student's eyes, especially on this September afternoon with its veiled and sleepy sun stealing in from the garden, and David fell into his chair, refilled his pipe, and stretched out his hand for a batch of manuscript which lay on his table, with an unconscious sigh of satisfaction.

The manuscript represented a pamphlet on certain trade questions by a young Oxford economist. For the firm of Grieve & Co., of Manchester, had made itself widely known for some five years past to the intelligence of northern England by its large and increasing trade in pamphlets of a political, social, or economical kind. They supplied mechanics' institutes, political associations, and workmen's clubs; nay, more, they had a system of hawkers of their own, which bade fair to extend largely. To be taken up by Grieve & Co. was already an object to young politicians, inventors, or social reformers, who might wish for one reason or another to bring their names or their ideas before the working-class of the North. And Grieve & Co. meant David, sitting smoking and reading in his armchair.

He gave the production now in his hands some careful reading for half an hour or more, then he suddenly threw it down.

'Stuff and nonsense!' he said to himself. 'The man has got the facts about those Oldham mills wrong somehow, I'm certain of it. Where's that letter I had last week?' and, jumping up, he took a bunch of keys out of his pocket and opened a drawer in his writing-table. The drawer contained mostly bundles of letters, and to the right hand a number of loose ones recently received, and not yet sorted or tied. He looked through these, found what he wanted, and was about to close the drawer when his attention was caught by a thick black note-book lying towards the back of it. He took it out, reminded by it of something he had meant to do, and carried it off with the Oldham letter to his chair. Once settled there again, he turned himself to the confutation of his pamphleteer. But not for long. The black book on his knee exercised a disturbing influence; his under-mind began to occupy itself with it, and at last the Oldham letter was hastily put down, and, taking out a pocket pen, David, with a smile at his own delinquency, opened the black book, turned over many closely written pages, and settled down to write another.

The black book was his journal. He had kept it intermittently since his marriage, rather as a journal of thought than as a journal of events, and he had to add to it to-day some criti-

cisms of a recent book by Renan which had been simmering in his mind for a week or two. Still it contained a certain number of records of events, and, taken generally, its entries formed an epitome of everything of most import—practical, moral, or intellectual—which had entered into David Grieve's life during the eight years since his marriage.

For instance :—

'*April* 10, 1876.—Our son was born this morning between three and four o'clock, after more than three years of marriage, when both of us had begun to despair a little. Now that he is come, I am decidedly interested in him, but the paternal relation hardly begins at birth, as the mother's does. The father, who has suffered nothing, cannot shut his eyes to the physical ugliness and weakness, the clash of pain and effort, in which the future man begins ; the mother, who has suffered everything, seems by a special spell of nature to feel nothing after the birth but the mystery and wonder of the *new creature*, the life born from her life—flesh of her flesh—breath of her breath. Else why is Lucy —who bears pain hardly, and had looked forward much less eagerly to the child, I think, than I had—so proud and content just to lie with the hungry creature beside her? while I am half inclined to say, What! so little for so much?—and to spend so full an energy in resenting the pains of maternity as an unmeaning blot on the scheme of things, that I have none left for a more genial emotion. Altogether, I am disappointed in myself as a father. I seem to have no imagination, and at present I would rather touch a loaded torpedo than my son.'

'*April* 30.—Lucy wishes to have the child christened at St. Damian's, and, though it goes against me, I have made no objection. And if she wishes it I shall go. It is not a question of one's own personal consistency or sincerity. The new individuality seems to me to have a claim in the matter, which I have no business to override because I happen to think in this way or that. My son when he grows up may be an ardent Christian. Then, if I had failed to comply with the national religious requirement, and had let him go unbaptized, because of my own beliefs or non-beliefs, he might, I think, rightly reproach me: "I was helpless, and you took advantage."

'Education is different. The duty of the parent to hand on what is best and truest in his own mind to the child is clear. Besides, the child goes on to carry what has been taught him into the open *agora* of the world's thought, and may there test its value as he pleases. But the omission, in a sense irreparable, of a definite and customary act like baptism from a child's existence, when hereafter the omission may cause him a pang quite disproportionate to any likes or dislikes of mine in the matter, appears to me unjust.

'I talk as if Lucy were not concerned!—or Dora! In reality I shall do as Lucy wills. Only they must not misunderstand me

for the future. If my son lives, his father will not hide his heart from him.

'I notice for the first time that Lucy is anxious and troubled about *her* father. She would like now to be friends, and she took care that the news of the child's birth should be conveyed to him at once through a common acquaintance. But he has taken no notice. In some natures the seeds of affection seem to fall only on the sand and rock of the heart, where because they have "no depth of earth they wither away;" while the seeds of hatred find the rich and good ground, where they spring and grow a hundred-fold.'

'*December* 8, 1877.—I have just been watching Sandy on the rug between the two dogs—Tim, and the most adorable black and tan *dachshund* that Lord Driffield has just given me. Sandy had a bit of biscuit, and was teasing his friends—first thrusting it under their noses, and then, just as they were preparing to gulp, drawing it back with a squeal of joy. The child's evident mastery and sense of humour, the grave puzzled faces of the dogs, delighted me. Then a whim seized me. I knelt down on the rug, and asked him to give me some. He held out the biscuit and laid it against my lips; I saw his eye waver; there was a gleam of mischief—the biscuit was half snatched away, and I felt absurdly chagrined. But in an instant the little face melted into the sweetest, keenest smile, and he almost choked me in his eagerness to thrust the biscuit down my throat. "Poor Daddy! Daddy *so* hungry."

'I recall with difficulty that I once thought him ugly and unattractive, poor little worm! On the contrary, it is quite clear that, whatever he may be when he grows up—I don't altogether trust his nose and mouth—for a child he is a beauty! His great brown eyes—so dark and noticeable beneath the fair hair in the little apple-blossom face—let you into the very heart of him. It is by no means a heart of unmixed goodness. There is a curious aloofness in his look sometimes, as of some pure intelligence beholding good and evil with the same even speculative mind. But this strange mood breaks up so humanly! he has such wiles—such soft wet kisses! such a little flute of a voice when he wants to coax or propitiate you!'

'*March* 1878.—My printing business has been growing very largely lately. I have now worked out my profit-sharing scheme with some minuteness, and yesterday the men, John, and I had a conference. In part, my plan is copied from that of the "Maison Leclaire," but I have worked a good deal of my own into it. Our English experience of this form of industrial partnership has been on the whole unfavourable; but, after a period of lassitude, experiments are beginning to revive. The great rock ahead lies in one's relation to the trade unions—one must remember that.

'To the practised eye the men to-day showed signs of

accepting it with cordiality, but the north-country man is before all things cautious, and I dare say a stranger would have thought them cool and suspicious. We meet again next week.

'I must explain the thing to Lucy—it is her right. She may resent it vehemently, as she did my refusal, in the autumn, to take advantage of that London opening. It will, of course, restrict our income just as it was beginning to expand quickly. I have left myself adequate superintendence wages, a bonus on these wages calculated in the same way as that of the men, a fixed percentage on the capital already employed in the business, and a nominal thirty per cent. of the profits. But I can see plainly that however the business extends, we—she and I—shall never "make our fortune" out of it. For beyond the fifty per cent. of the profits to be employed in bonuses on wages, and the twenty per cent. set aside for the benefit and pension society, my thirty per cent. must provide me with what I want for various purposes connected with the well-being of the workers, and for the widening of our operations on the publishing side, in a more or less propagandist spirit.

'My bookselling business proper is, of course, at present outside the scheme, and I do not see very well how anything of the kind can be applied to it. This will be a comfort to Lucy; and just now the trade both in old and foreign books is prosperous and brings me in large returns. But I cannot disguise from myself that the other experiment is likely to absorb more and more of my energies in the future. I have from sixty to eighty men now in the printing-office—a good set, take them altogether. They have been gradually learning to understand me and my projects. The story of what Leclaire was able to do for the lives and characters of his men is wonderful!

'My poor little wife! I try to explain these things to her, but she thinks that I am merely making mad experiments with money, teaching workmen to be "uppish" and setting employers against me. When in my turn I do my best to get at what she means by "getting on," I find it comes to a bigger house, more servants, a carriage, dinner parties, and, generally, a move to London, bringing with it a totally new circle of acquaintance who need never know exactly what she or I rose from. She does not put all this into words, but I think I have given it accurately.

'And I should yield a great deal more than I do if I had any conviction that these things, when got, would make her happy. But every increase in our scale of living since we began has seemed rather to make her restless, and fill her with cravings which yet she can never satisfy. In reality she lives by her affections, as most women do. One day she wants to lose sight of everyone who knew her as Purcell's daughter, or me as Purcell's assistant; the next she is fretting to be reconciled to her father. In the same way, she thinks I am hard about money; she sees no attraction in the things which fill me with

enthusiasm; but at the same time, if I were dragged into a life where I was morally starved and discontented, she would suffer too. No, I must steer through—judge for her and myself—and make life as pleasant to her in little ways as it can be made.

'Ah! the gospel of "getting on"—it fills me with a kind of rage. There is an essential truth in it, no doubt, and if I had not been carried away by it at one time, I should have far less power over circumstances than I now have. But to square the whole of this mysterious complex life to it—to drop into the grave at last, having missed, because of it, all that sheds dignity and poetry on the human lot, all that makes it worth while or sane to hope in a destiny for man diviner and more lasting than appears—horrible!

'Yet Lucy may rightly complain of me. I get dreamy—I procrastinate. And it is unjust to expect that her ideal of social pleasure should be the same as mine. I ought to—and I will—make more effort to please her.'

'*July* 1878.—I am in Paris again. Yesterday afternoon I wandered about looking at those wrecks of the Commune which yet remain. The new Hôtel de Ville is rising, but the Tuileries still stands charred and ruined against the sky, an object lesson for Belleville. I walked up to the Arc de l'Etoile, and coming back I strolled into a little leafy open-air restaurant for a cup of coffee. Suddenly I recognised the place—the fountain—a large quicksilver ball—a little wooden pavilion festooned with coloured lamps. It was as though eight years were wiped away.

'I could not stay there. But the shock soon subsided. There is something bewildering, de-personalising, in the difference between one stage of life and another. In certain moods I feel scarcely a thread of identity between my present self and myself of eight years ago.

'This morning I have seen Louie, after an interval of three years. Montjoie keeps out of my way, and, as a matter of fact, I have never set eyes on him since I passed him close to the Auteuil station in July 1870. From Louie's account, he is now a confirmed drunkard, and can hardly ever be got to do any serious work. Yet she brought me a clay study of their little girl which he threw off in a lucid interval two or three months ago, surely as good as anybody or anything, astonishingly delicate and true. Just now, apparently, he has a bad fit on, and but for my allowance to her she tells me they would be all but destitute. It is remarkable to see how she has taken possession of this money and with what shrewdness she manages it. I suspect her of certain small Bourse speculations—she has all the financial slang on the tip of her tongue—but if so, they succeed. For she keeps herself and the child, scornfully allows him so much for his pocket in the week, and even, as I judge from the consideration she enjoys in the church she frequents, finds money for her own Catholic purposes.

'Louie a fervent Catholic and an affectionate mother! The mixture of old and new in her—the fresh habits of growth imposed on the original plant—startle me at every turn. Her Catholicism, which resolves itself, perhaps, into the cult of a particular church and of two or three admirable and sagacious priests, seems to me one long intrigue of a comparatively harmless kind. It provides her with enemies, allies, plots, battles, and surprises. It ministers, too, to her love of colour and magnificence—a love which implies an artistic sense, and would have been utilised young if she had belonged to an artistic family.

'But just as I am adapting myself to the new Louie the old reappears! She was talking to me yesterday of her exertions at Easter for the Easter decorations, and describing to me in superlatives the final splendour of the results, and the compliments which had been paid her by one or two of the clergy, when the name of a lady who seems to have been connected with the church longer than Louie has, and is evidently her rival in various matters of pious service and charitable organisation, came to her lips. Instantly her face flamed, and the denunciation she launched was quite in the old Clough End and Manchester vein. I was to understand that this person was a mean, designing, worthless creature, a hideous object besides, and "made up;" and as to her endeavours to ingratiate herself with Father this and Father that, the worst motives were hinted at.

'Another little incident struck me more painfully still. Her devotion to the little Cécile is astonishing. She is miserable when the child has a finger-ache, and seems to spend most of her time in dressing and showing her off. Yet I suspect she is often irritable and passionate even with Cécile; the child has a shrinking quiet way with her which is not natural. And to-day, when she was in the middle of cataloguing Montjoie's enormities, and I was trying to restrain her, remembering that Cécile was looking at a book on the other side of the room, she suddenly called to the child imperiously:

'"Cécile! come here and tell your uncle what your father is!"

'And, to my horror, the little creature walked across to us, and, as though she were saying a lesson, began to *debiter* a set speech about her father's crimes and her mother's wrongs. containing the wildest abuse of her father, and prompted throughout by the excited and scarlet Louie. I tried to stop it; but Louie only pushed me away. The child rose to her part, became perfectly white, declaimed with a shrill fury, indescribably repulsive, and at the end sank into a chair, hardly able to stand. Then Louie covered her with kisses, made me get wine for her, and held her cradled in her arms till it was time for them to go.

'On the way downstairs, when Cécile was in front of us, I spoke my mind about this performance in the strongest way. But Louie only laughed at me. "It shall be quite plain that she is *mine* and not his! I don't run away from him; I keep

him from dying on the streets like a dog; but his child and everyone else shall know what he is."

'It is a tigress passion. Poor little child!—a thin, brown, large-eyed creature, with rather old, affected manners, and a small clinging hand.'

'*July 4th.*—Father Lenoir, Louie's director, has just been to call upon me; Louie insisted on my going to a festival service at St. Eulalie this morning, and introduced me to him—an elderly, courteous, noble-faced priest of a fine type. He was discreet, of course, and made me feel the enormous difference that exists between an outsider and a member of the one flock. But I gathered that the people among whom she is now thrown perfectly understand Louie. By means of the subtle and powerful discipline of the Church, a discipline which has absorbed the practical wisdom of generations, they have established a hold upon her. And they work on her also through the child. But he gave me to understand that there had been crises; that the opportunities for and temptations to dissolute living which beset Montjoie's wife were endless; and it was a marvel that under such circumstances a being so wild had yet kept straight.

'I shook him warmly by the hand at parting, and thanked him from my heart. He somewhat resented my thanks, I thought. They imported, perhaps, a personal element into what he regards as a matter of pure ecclesiastical practice and duty.'

'*December 25th*, 1878.—Lucy is still asleep; the rest of the house is just stirring. I am in my study looking out on the snowy garden and the frosted trees, which are as yet fair and white, though in a few hours the breath of Manchester will have polluted them.

'Last night I went with Lucy and Dora to the midnight service at St. Damian's. It pleased them that I went; and I thought the service, with its bells, its resonant *Adeste fideles*, and its white flowers, singularly beautiful and touching. And yet, in truth, I was only happy in it because I was so far removed from it; because the legend of Bethlehem and the mythology of the Trinity are no longer matters of particular interest or debate with me; because after a period of three-fourths assent, followed by one lasting over years of critical analysis and controversial reading, I have passed of late into a conception of Christianity far more positive, fruitful, and human than I have yet held. I would fain believe it the Christianity of the future. But the individual must beware lest he wrap his personal thinking in phrases too large for it.

'Yet, at least, one may say that it is a conception which has been gaining more and more hold on the minds of those who during the present century have thought most deeply, and laboured most disinterestedly in the field of Christian antiquity —who have sought with most learning and with fewest hindrances

from circumstance to understand Christianity, whether as a history or as a philosophy.

'I have read much German during the past year, and of late a book reviewing the whole course of religious thought in Germany since Schleiermacher, with a mixture of exhaustive information and brilliant style most unusual in a German, has absorbed all my spare hours. Such a movement!—such a wealth of collective labour and individual genius thrown into it—producing offshoots and echoes throughout the world, transforming opinion with the slow inevitableness which belongs to all science, possessing already a great past and sure of a great future.

'In the face of it, our orthodox public, the contented ignorance of our clergy, the solemn assurance of our religious press—what curious and amazing phenomena! Yet probably the two worlds have their analogues in every religion; and what the individual has to learn in these days at once of outward debate and of unifying social aspiration, is "to dissent no longer with the heat of a narrow antipathy, but with the quiet of a large sympathy."'

CHAPTER II

A few days after Lord Driffield's warm invitation to Mr. and Mrs. David Grieve to spend an October Saturday-to-Monday at Benet's Park had been accepted, Lucy was sitting in the September dusk putting some frills into Sandy's Sunday coat, when the door opened and Dora walked in.

'You do look done!' said Lucy, as she held up her cheek to her cousin's salutation. 'What have you been about?'

'They kept me late at the shop, for a Saturday,' said Dora, with a sigh of fatigue, 'and since then I've been decorating. It's the Dedication Festival to-morrow.'

'Well, the festivals don't do *you* any good,' said Lucy, emphatically; 'they always tire you to death. When you do get to church, I don't believe you can enjoy anything. Why don't you let other people have a turn now, after all these years? There's Miss Barham, and Charlotte Corfield, and Mrs. Willan—they'd all do a great deal more if you didn't do so much. I know that.'

Lucy's cool bright eye meant, indeed, that she had heard some remarks made of late with regard to Dora's position at St. Damian's somewhat unfavourable to her cousin. It was said that she was jealous of co-operation or interference on the part of new members of the congregation in the various tasks she had been accustomed for years past to lay upon herself in connection with the church. She was universally held to be extraordinarily good; but both in the large shop, where she was now forewoman, and at St. Damian's, people were rather afraid of her, and

inclined to head oppositions to her. A certain severity had grown upon her; she was more self-confident, though it was a self-confidence grounded always on the authority of the Church; and some parts of the nature which at twenty had been still soft and plastic were now tending to rigidity.

At Lucy's words she flushed a little.

'How can they know as well as I what has to be done?' she said with energy. 'The chancel screen is *beautiful*, Lucy—all yellow fern and heather. You must go to-morrow, and take Sandy.'

As she spoke she threw off her waterproof and unloosed the strings of her black bonnet. Her dark serge dress with its white turn-down collar and armlets—worn these last for the sake of her embroidery work—gave her a dedicated conventual look. She was paler than of old; the eyes, though beautiful and luminous, were no longer young, and lines were fast deepening in the cheeks and chin, with their round childish moulding. What had been *naïveté* and tremulous sweetness at twenty, was now conscious strength and patience. The countenance had been fashioned—and fashioned nobly—by life; but the tool had cut deep, and had not spared the first grace of the woman in developing the saint. The hands especially, the long thin hands defaced by the labour of years, which met yours in a grasp so full of purpose and feeling, told a story and symbolised a character.

'David won't come,' said Lucy, in answer to Dora's last remark; 'he hardly ever goes anywhere now unless he hears of some one going to preach that he thinks he'll like.'

'No—I know,' said Dora. A shade came over her face. The attitude of David Grieve towards religion during the last four or five years represented to her the deep disappointment of certain eager hopes, perhaps one might almost call them ambitions, of her missionary youth. The disappointment had brought a certain bitterness with it, though for long years she had been sister and closest friend to both David and his wife. And it had made her doubly sensitive with regard to Lucy, whom she had herself brought over from the Baptist communion to the Church, and Sandy, who was her godchild.

After a pause, she hesitatingly brought a small paper book out of the handbag she carried.

'I brought you this, Lucy. Father Russell sent it you. He thinks it the best beginning book you can have. He always gives it in the parish; and if the mothers will only use it, it makes it so much easier to teach the children when they come to Sunday school.'

Lucy took it doubtfully. It was called 'The Mother's Catechism;' and, opening it, she saw that it contained a series of questions and answers, as between a mother and a child.

'I don't think Sandy would understand it,' she said, slowly, as she turned it over.

'Oh yes, he would!' said Dora, eagerly. 'Why, he's nearly

five, Lucy. It's really time you began to teach him something—unless you want him to grow up a little heathen!'

The last words had a note of indignation. Lucy took no notice. She was still turning over the book.

'And I don't think David will like it,' she said, still more slowly than before.

Dora flushed.

'He can't want to keep Sandy from being taught any religion at all! It wouldn't be fair to you—or to the child. And if he won't do it, if he isn't certain enough about what he thinks, how can he mind your doing it?'

'I don't know,' said Lucy, and paused. 'I sometimes think,' she went on, with more energy, 'that David will be quite different some day from what he has been. I'm sure he'll want to teach Sandy.'

'He's got nothing to teach him!' cried Dora. Then she added in another voice—a voice of wounded feeling—'If he was to be brought up an atheist, I don't think David ought to have asked me to be godmother.'

'He shan't be brought up an atheist,' exclaimed Lucy startled. Then, feeling the subject too much for her—for it provoked in her a mingled train of memories which she had not words enough to express—she turned back to her work, leaving the book on the table and the discussion pending.

'David's dreadfully late,' she said, discontentedly, looking at the clock.

'Where is he?'

'Down in Ancoats, I expect. He told me he had a committee there to-day after work, about those houses he's going to pull down. He's got Mr. Buller and Mr. Haycraft—and'—Lucy named some half-dozen more rich and well-known men—'to help him, and they're going to pull down one of the worst bits of James Street, David says, and build up new houses for working people. He's wild about it. Oh, I know we'll have no money at all left soon!' cried Lucy indignantly, with a shrug of her small shoulders.

Dora smiled at what seemed to her a childish petulance.

'Why, I'm sure you've got everything very nice, Lucy, and all you want.'

'No, indeed, I *haven't* got all I want,' said Lucy, looking up and frowning; 'I never shall, neither. I want David to be—to be—like everybody else. He might be a rich man to-morrow if he wouldn't have such ideas. He doesn't think a bit about me and Sandy. I told you what would happen when he made that division between the bookselling and the printing, and took up with those ideas about the men. I knew he'd come not to care about the bookselling. And I was *perfectly* right! There's that printing-office getting bigger and bigger, and crowds of men waiting to be taken on, and such a lot of business doing as never was. And are we a bit the richer? Not a penny—or hardly. It's sicken-

ing to hear the way people talk about him! Why, they say the last election wouldn't have been nearly so good for the Liberals all about the North if it hadn't been for the things he's always publishing and the two papers he started last year. He might be a member of Parliament any day, and he wouldn't be a member of Parliament—not he! He told me he didn't care twopence about it. No, he doesn't care for anything but just taking *our* money and giving it to other people—there! You may say what you like, but it's true.'

The wilful energy with which Lucy spoke the last words transformed the small face—brought out the harder lines on it.

'Well, I never know what it is that *you* want exactly,' said Dora. 'I don't think you do yourself.'

Lucy stitched silently, her thin red lips pressed together. She knew perfectly well what she wanted, only she was ashamed to confess it to the religious and ascetic Dora. Her ideal of living was filled in with images and desires abundantly derived from Manchester life, where every day she saw people grow rich rapidly, and rise as a matter of course into that upper region of gentility, carriages, servants, wines, and grouse-moors, whither, ever since it had become plain to her that David could, if he chose, easily place her there, it had been her constant craving to go. Other people came to be gentlefolks and lord it over the land—why not they? It made her mad, as she had said to Dora, to see *their* money—their very own money—chucked away to other people, and they getting no good of it, and remaining mere working booksellers and printers as before.

'Why don't you go and help him?' said Dora suddenly. 'Perhaps if you were to go right in and see what he's doing, you wouldn't mind it so much. You might get to like it. He doesn't want to keep everything to himself—he wants to share with those that need. If there were a good many others like that, perhaps there'd be fewer awful things happening down at Ancoats.'

A sigh rose to her lips. Her beautiful eyes grew sad.

'Well, I did try once or twice,' said Lucy, pettishly, 'but I've always told you that sort of thing isn't in my line. Of course I understand about giving away, and all that. But he'll hardly let you give away at all! He says it's pauperising the people. And the things he wants me to do—I never seem to do 'em right, and I can't get to care a bit about them.'

The tone in her voice betrayed a past experience which had been in some way trying and discouraging to a fine natural vanity.

Dora did not answer. She played absently with the little book on the table.

'Oh! but he's going to let us accept the invitation to Benet's Park—I didn't tell you that,' said Lucy suddenly, her face clearing.

Dora was startled.

'Why, I thought you told me he wouldn't go?'

'So I did. But—well, I let out!' said Lucy, colouring, 'and

he's changed his mind. But I'm rather in a fright, Dora, though I don't tell him. Think of that big house and all those servants —I'm more frightened of *them* than of anybody! I say, *do* you think my new dresses 'll do? You'll come up and look at them, won't you? Not that you're much use about dresses.'

Dora was profoundly interested and somewhat bewildered. That her little cousin Lucy, Purcell's daughter and Daddy's niece, should be going to stay as an invited guest in a castle, with an earl and countess, was very amazing. Was it because the Radicals had got the upper hand so much at the election? She could not understand it, but some of her old girlishness, her old interest in small womanish trifles, came back upon her, and she discussed the details of what Lucy might expect so eagerly that Lucy was quite delighted with her.

In the middle of their talk a step was heard in the hall.

'Ah, there he is!' said Lucy; 'now we'll ring for supper, and I'll go and get ready.'

Dora sat alone for a few minutes, and then David came in.

'Ah! Dora, this is nice. Lucy says you will stay to supper. We get so busy, you and I, we see each other much too seldom.'

He spoke in his most cordial, brotherly tone, and, standing on the rug with his back to the fire, he looked down upon her with evident pleasure.

As for her, though the throb of her young passion had been so soon and so sternly silenced, it was still happiness to her to be in the same room with David Grieve, and any unusual kindness from him, or a long talk with him, would often send her back to her little room in Ancoats stored with a cheerful warmth of soul which helped her through many days. For of late years she had been more liable than of old to fits of fretting—fretting about her father, about her own sins and other people's, about the little worries of her Sunday-school class, or the little rubs of church work. The contact with a nature so large and stimulating, though sometimes it angered and depressed her through the influence of religious considerations, was yet on the whole of infinite service to her, of more service than she knew.

'Have you forgiven me for upsetting Sandy?' she asked him, with a smile.

'I'm on the way to it. I left him just now prancing about Lucy's bed, and making an abominable noise. She told him to be quiet, whereupon he indignantly informed her that he was "a dwagon hunting wats." So I imagine he hasn't had "the wrong dinner" to-day.'

They both laughed.

'And you have been in Ancoats?'

'Yes,' said David, tossing back his black hair with an animated gesture, and thrusting his hands into his pockets. 'Yes —we are getting on. We have got the whole of that worst James Street court into our hands. We shall begin pulling down directly, and the plans for the new buildings are almost ready.

And we have told all the old tenants that they shall have a prior claim on the new rooms if they choose to come back. Some will; for a good many others of course we shall be too respectable, though I am set on keeping the plans as simple and the rents as low as possible.'

Dora sat looking at him with somewhat perplexed eyes.

Her Christianity had been originally of the older High Church type, wherein the ideal of personal holiness had not yet been fused with the ideal of social service. The care of the poor and needy was, of course, indispensable to the Christian life; but she thought first and most of bringing them to church, and to the blessing and efficacy of the sacraments; then of giving them money when they were sick, and assuring to them the Church's benediction in dying. The modern fuss about overcrowded houses and insanitary conditions—the attack on bricks and mortar—the preaching of temperance, education, thrift—these things often seemed to Christian people of Dora's type and day, if they spoke their true minds, to be tinged with atheism and secularism. They were jealous all the time for something better. They instinctively felt that the preëminence of certain ideas, most dear to them, was threatened by this absorption in the detail of the mere human life.

Something of this it was that passed vaguely through Dora's mind as she sat listening to David's further talk about his Ancoats scheme; and at last, influenced, perhaps, by a half-conscious realisation of her demur—it was only that—he let it drop.

'What is that book?' he said, his quick eye detecting the little paper-covered volume on Lucy's table. And, stepping forward, he took it up.

Dora unexpectedly found her voice a little husky as she replied, and had to clear her throat.

'It is a book I brought for Lucy. Sandy is a baptized Christian, David. Lucy wants to teach him, so I brought her this little Catechism, which Father Russell recommends.'

David turned the book over in silence. He read a passage concerning the Virgin Mary; another, in which the child asked about the number and names of the Archangels, gave a detailed answer; another in which Dissenters were handled with an acrimony which contrasted with a general tone of sweetness and unction.

David laid it down on the mantelpiece.

'No, Dora, I can't have Sandy taught out of this.'

He spoke with dignity, but with an endeavour to make his tone as gentle as possible.

Dora was silent a moment; then she broke out:

'What will you teach him, then? Is he to be a Christian at all?'

'In a sense, yes; with all my heart, yes! so far, at least, as his father has any share in the matter.'

'And is his mother to have no voice?' Dora went on with growing bitterness and hurry. 'And as for me—why did you let me be his godmother? I take it seriously, and I may do nothing.'

'You may do everything,' he said, sitting down beside her, 'except teach him extreme matter of this kind, which, because I am what I am, will make a critic of the child before his time. I am not a bigot, Dora! I shall not interfere with Lucy; she would not teach him in this way. She talks to him; and she instinctively feels for me, and what she says comes softly and vaguely to him. It is different with things like this, set down in black and white, and to be learnt by heart. You must remember that half of it seems to me false history, and some of it false morals.'

He looked at her anxiously. The jarring note was hateful to him. He had always taken for granted that Lucy was under Dora's influence religiously—had perhaps made it an excuse for a gradual withdrawal of his inmost mind from his wife, which in reality rested on quite other reasons. But his heart was full of dreams about his son. He could not let Dora have her way there.

'Oh, how different it is,' cried Dora, in a low, intense voice, twining her hands together, 'from what I once thought!'

'No!' he said, vehemently, 'there is no real difference between you and me—there never can be; teach Sandy to be good and to love you! That's what I should like!'

His eyes were full of emotion, but he smiled. Dora, however, could not respond. The inner tension was too strong. She turned away, and began fidgeting with Lucy's workbag.

Then a small voice and a preparatory turmoil were heard outside.

'Auntie Dora! Auntie Dora!' cried Sandy, rushing in with a hop, skip, and a jump, and flourishing a picture-book, 'look at zese pickers! Dat's a buffalo—most es*tror*nary animal, the buffalo!'

'Come here, rascal!' called his father, and the child ran up to him. David knelt to look at the picture, but the little fellow suddenly dropped it and his interest in it, in a way habitual to him, twined one arm round his father's neck, laid his cheek against David's, crossed one foot over the other, and, thumb in mouth, looked Dora up and down with his large, observant eyes.

Dora, melted, wooed him to come to her. Her adoration of him was almost on a level with David's. Sandy took a minute to think whether he should leave his father. Then he climbed her knee, and patronised her on the subject of buffaloes and giraffes—'I tan't 'splain everything to you, Auntie Dora; you'll know when you're older'—till Lucy and supper came together. And supper was brightened both by Lucy's secret content in the prospect of the Benet's Park visit and by the child's humours. When Dora said good night to her host, their manner to each

other had its usual fraternal quality. Nevertheless, the woman carried away with her both resentment and distress.

About a fortnight later David and Lucy started one fine October afternoon for Benet's Park. The cab was crowded with Lucy's luggage, and David, in new clothes to please his wife, felt himself, as the cab door closed upon them, a trapped and miserable man.

What had possessed Lord Driffield to send that unlucky note? For Lord Driffield himself David had a grateful and real affection. Ever since that whimsical scholar had first taken kindly notice of the boy-tradesman, there had been a growing friendship between the two; and of late years Lord Driffield's interest in David's development and career had become particularly warm and cordial. He had himself largely contributed to the subtler sides of that development, had helped to refine the ambitions and raise the standards of the growing intellect; his advice, owing to his lifelong commerce with and large possession of books, had often been of great practical use to the young man; his library had for years been at David's service, both for reference and borrowing; and he had supplied his favourite with customers and introductions in a large percentage of the University towns both at home and abroad, a social *milieu* where Lord Driffield was more at home and better appreciated than in any other. The small delicately featured man, whose distinguished face, with its abundant waves of silky hair—once ruddy, now a goldenish white—presided so oddly over an incorrigible shabbiness of dress, had become a familiar figure in David's life. Their friendship, of course, was limited to a very definite region of thought and relation; but they corresponded freely, when they were apart, on matters of literature, bibliography, sometimes of politics; and no sooner was the Earl at Benet's Park than David had constant calls from him in his office at the back of the now spacious and important establishment in Prince's Street.

But Lord Driffield, as we know, had managed his mind better than his marriage, and his *savoir vivre* was no match for his learning. He bore his spouse and his country-gentleman life patiently enough in general; but every now and then he fell into exasperation. His wife flooded him too persistently, perhaps, with cousins and grandees of the duller sort, whose ideas seemed to him as raw as their rent-rolls were large—till he rebelled. Then he would have *his* friends; selecting them more or less at random from up and down the ranks of literature and science, till Lady Driffield raised her eyebrows, invited a certain number of her own set to keep her in countenance, and made up her mind to endure. At the end of the ordeal Lord Driffield generally made the rueful reflection that it had not gone off well. But he felt the better and digested the better for the self-assertion of it, and it was periodically renewed.

David and Lucy Grieve had been asked in some such moment of domestic annoyance. The Earl had seen 'Grieve's wife' twice, and hastily remembered that she seemed 'a presentable little person.' He was constitutionally indifferent to and contemptuous of women. But he imagined that it would please David to bring his wife; and he was perhaps tolerably certain, since no one, be he rake or savant, possesses an historical name and domain without knowing it, that it would please the bookseller's wife to be invited.

David suspected a good deal of this, for he knew his man pretty well. As he sat opposite to Lucy in the railway carriage —first-class, since she felt it incongruous to go in anything else —he recalled certain luncheons at Benet's Park, when he had been doing a bit of work in the library during the family sojourn. Certainly Lucy did not realise at all how formidable these aristocratic women could be!

And his pride—at bottom the workman's pride—was made uncomfortable by his wife's *newness*. New hat, new dress, new gloves! Himself too! It annoyed him that Lady Driffield should be so plainly informed that great pains had been taken for her. He felt irritable and out of gear. Being neither self-conscious nor awkward, he became both for the moment, out of sympathy with Lucy.

Yet Lucy was supremely happy as they sped along to Stalybridge. Suppose her father heard of it! She could no doubt insure his knowing; but it might set his back up still more, make him more mad than before with her and David. Eight years and more since he had spoken to her, and the other day, when he had seen her coming in Deansgate, he had crossed to the other side of the street!—Were those sleeves of her evening dress quite right? They were not caught down, she thought, quite in the right place. No doubt there would be time before dinner to put in a stitch. And she did hope that pleat from the neck would look all right. It was peculiar, but Miss Helby had assured her it was much worn. Would there be many titled people, she wondered, and would all the ladies wear diamonds? She thought disconsolately of the little black enamelled locket and the Roman pearls, which were all the adornments she possessed.

After a short journey they alighted at their station as the dusk was beginning.

'Are you for Benet's Park, m'm?' said the porter to Lucy. 'All right!—the carriage is just outside.'

Lucy held herself an inch taller, and waited for David to come back from the van with their two new portmanteaus.

Meanwhile she noticed two other groups of people, whose bags and rugs were being appropriated by a couple of powdered footmen—a husband and wife, and a tall military-looking man accompanied by two ladies. The two ladies belonged to the height of fashion—of that Lucy was certain, as she stole an in-

timidated glance at the cut of their tailor-made gowns and the costliness of the fur cloak which one of them carried. As for the other lady, could she also be on her way to Benet's Park—with this uncouth figure, this mannish height and breadth, this complete lack of waist, these large arms and hands, and the over-ample garments and hat, of green cashmere slashed with yellow, in which she was marvellously arrayed? Yet she seemed entirely at her ease, which was more than Lucy was, and her little dark husband was already talking with the tall ladies.

David, having captured the luggage, was accosted by one of the footmen, who then came up to Lucy and took her bag. She and David followed in his wake, and found themselves mingling with the other five persons, who were clearly to be their fellow-guests.

As they stood outside the station door, the elder of the two ladies turned and ran a scrutinising eye over Lucy and the person in sage green following her; then she said rapidly to the gentleman with her:

'Now, remember Mathilde can't go outside, and I prefer to have her with me.'

'Well I suppose there'll be room in the omnibus,' said he, shortly. 'I shall go in the dog-cart and get a smoke. By George! those are good horses of Driffield's! And they are not the pair I sent him over from Ireland in the autumn either.'

He went down the steps, patted and examined the horses, and threw a word or two to the coachman. Lucy, palpitating with excitement and alarm, felt a corresponding awe of the person who could venture such familiarities even with the servants and live-stock of Benet's Park.

The servant let down the steps of the smart omnibus with its impatient steeds. The two tall ladies got in.

'Mathilde!' called the elder.

A little maid, dressed in black, and carrying a large dressing-bag, hurried down the steps before the remaining guests, and was helped in by the footman. The lady in sage green smiled at her husband—a sleepy, humorous smile. Then she stepped in, the footman touching his hat to her as though he knew her.

'Any maid, m'm?' said the man to Lucy, as she was following.

'No—oh *no!*' said Lucy, stumbling in. 'Give me my bag, please.'

The man gave it to her, and timidly looking round her she settled herself in the smallest space and the remotest corner she could.

When the carriage rolled off, the lady in green looked out of window for a while at the dark flying fields and woods, over which the stars were beginning to come out.

'Are you a stranger in these parts, or do you know Benet's Park already?' she said presently to Lucy, who was next her, in a pleasant, nonchalant way.

'I have never been here before,' said Lucy, dreading somehow the sound of her own voice; 'but my husband is well acquainted with the family.'

She was pleased with her own phrase, and began to recover herself. The lady said no more, however, but leant back and apparently went to sleep. The tall ladies presently did the same. Lucy's depression returned as the silence lasted. She supposed that it was aristocratic not to talk to people till you had been introduced to them. She hoped she would be introduced when they reached Benet's Park. Otherwise it would be awkward staying in the same house.

Then she fell into a dream, imagining herself with a maid—ordering her about deliciously—saying to the handsome footman, 'My maid has my wraps'—and then with the next jolt of the carriage waking up to the humdrum and unwelcome reality. And David might be as rich as anybody! Familiar resentments and cravings stirred in her, and her drive became even less of a pleasure than before. As for David, he spent the whole of it in lively conversation with the small dark man, beside the window.

The carriage paused a moment. Then great gates were swung back and in they sped, the horses stepping out smartly now that they were within scent of home. There was a darkness as of thick and lofty trees, then dim opening stretches of park; lastly a huge house, mirage-like in the distance, with rows of lighted windows, a crackling of crisp gravel, the sound of the drag, and a pomp of opening doors.

'Shall I take your bag, Madam?' said a magnificent person, bending towards Lucy, as, clinging to her possession, she followed the lady in green into the outer hall.

'Oh no, thank you! at least, shall I find it again?' said the frightened Lucy, looking in front of her at the vast hall, with its tall lamps and statues and innumerable doors.

'It shall be sent upstairs for you, Madam,' said the magnificent person gravely, and, as Lucy thought, severely.

She submitted, and looked round for David. Oh, where was he?

'This is a fine hall, isn't it?' said the lady in green beside her. 'Bad period—but good of its kind. What on earth do they spoil it for with those shocking modern portraits?'

Such assurance—combined with such garments—in such a house—it was nothing short of a miracle!

CHAPTER III

'Now, Lavinia, do be kind to young Mrs. Grieve. She is evidently as shy as she can be.'

So spoke Lord Driffield, with some annoyance in his voice, as he looked into his wife's room after dressing for dinner.

'I suppose she can amuse herself like other people,' said Lady

Driffield. She was standing by the fire warming a satin-shoed foot. 'I have told Williams to leave all the houses open to-morrow. And there's church, and the pictures. The Danbys and the rest of us are going over to Lady Herbart's for tea.'

A cloud came over Lord Driffield's face. He made some impatient exclamation, which was muffled by his white beard and moustache, and walked back to his own room.

Meanwhile Lucy, in another corridor of the great house, was standing before a long glass, looking herself up and down in a tumult of excitement and anxiety.

She had just passed through a formidable hour! In a great gallery, with polished floor, and hung with portraits of ancestral Driffields, the party from the station had found Lady Driffield, with five or six other people, who seemed to be already staying in the house. Though the butler had preceded them, no names but those of Lady Venetia Danby and Miss Danby had been announced; and when Lady Driffield, a tall effective-looking woman with a cold eye and an expressionless voice, said a short 'How do you do?' and extended a few fingers to David and his wife, no names were mentioned, and Lucy felt a sudden depressing conviction that no names were needed. To the mistress of the house they were just two nonentities, to whom she was to give bed and board for two nights to gratify her husband's whims; whether their insignificant name happened to be Grieve, or Tompkins, or Johnson, mattered nothing.

So Lucy had sat down in a subdued state of mind, and was handed tea by a servant, while the Danbys—Colonel Danby, after his smoke in the dog-cart, following close on the heels of his wife and daughter—mixed with the group round the tea-table, and much chatter, combined with a free use of Christian names, liberal petting of Lady Driffield's Pomeranian, and an account by Miss Danby of an accident to herself in the hunting-field, filled up a half-hour which to one person, at least, had the qualities of a nightmare. David was talking to the lady in green—to whom, by the way, Lady Driffield had been distinctly civil. Once he came over to relieve Lucy from a waterproof which was on her knee, and to get her some bread and butter. But otherwise no one took any notice of her, and she fell into a nervous terror lest she should upset her cup, or drop her teaspoon, or scatter her crumbs on the floor.

Then at last Lord Driffield, who had been absent on some country business, which his soul loathed, had come in, and with the cordiality, nay, affection of his greeting to David, and the kindness of his notice of herself, little Lucy's spirits had risen at a bound. She felt instinctively that a protector had arrived, and even the formidable procession upstairs in the wake of Lady Driffield, when the moment at last arrived for showing the guests to their rooms, had passed off safely, Lucy throwing out an agitated 'Thank you!' when Lady Driffield had even gone so far as to open a door with her own bediamonded hand, which had

Mrs. Grieve's plebeian appellations written in full upon the card attached to it.

And now? *Was* the dress nice? Would it do? Unluckily, since Lucy's rise in the social scale which had marked the last few years, the sureness of her original taste in dress had somewhat deserted her. Her natural instinct was for trimness and closeness; but of late her ideals had been somewhat confused by a new and more important dressmaker with 'æsthetic' notions, who had been recommended to her by the good-natured and artistic wife of one of the College professors. Under the guidance of this expert, she had chosen a 'Watteau *sacque*' from a fashion-plate, not quite daring, little tradesman's daughter as she felt herself at bottom, to venture on the undisguised low neck and short sleeves of ordinary fashionable dress.

She said fretfully to herself that she could see nothing in this vast room. More and more candles did she light with a trembling hand, trusting devoutly that no one would come in and discover her with such an extravagant illumination. Then she tried each of the two long glasses of the room in turn. Her courage mounted. It *was* pretty. The terra-cotta shade was *exquisite*, and *no* one could tell that the satin was cotton-backed. The flowing sleeves and the pleat from the shoulder gave her dignity, she was certain; and she had done her hair beautifully. She wished David would come in and see! But his room was across a little landing, which, indeed, seemed to be all their own, for it was shut off from the passage they had entered from by an outer door. There was, however, more than one door opening on to the landing, and Lucy was so much afraid of her surroundings that she preferred to wait till he came.

Meanwhile—what a bedroom! Why, it was more gorgeous than any drawing-room she had ever entered. Every article of furniture was of old marqueterie, adapted to modern uses, the appointments of the writing-table were of solid silver—Lucy had eagerly ascertained the fact by looking at the 'marks'—and as for the *towels*, she simply could not have imagined that such things were made! Her little soul was in a whirl of envy, admiration, pride. What tales she would have to tell Dora when they got home!

'Are you ready?' said David, opening the door. 'I believe I hear people going downstairs.'

He came in arrayed in the new dress suit which became him as well as anything else; for he had a natural dignity which absorbed and surmounted any novelty of circumstance or setting, and was purely a matter of character, depending upon a mind familiar with large interests and launched towards ideal aims. He might be silent, melancholy, impracticable, but never meanly self-conscious. It had rarely occurred to anyone to pity or condescend to David Grieve.

Lucy looked at him with uneasy pride. Then she glanced back at her own reflection in the glass.

'What do you think of it?' she asked him, eagerly.

'Magnificent!' said David, with all the sincerity of ignorance—wishing, moreover, to make his wife pleased with herself. 'But oughtn't you to have gloves instead of those things?'

He pointed doubtfully to the mittens on her arms.

'Oh, David, don't say that!' cried Lucy, in despair. 'Miss Helby said these were the right things. It's to be like an old picture, don't you understand? And I haven't got any gloves but those I came in. Oh, don't be so disagreeable!'

She looked ready to cry. Poor David hastened to declare that Miss Helby must be right, and that it was all very nice. Then they blew out the candles and ventured forth.

'Lord Driffield says that Canon Aylwin is coming,' said David, examining some Hollar engravings on the wall of the staircase as they descended, 'and the Dean of Bradford, who is staying with him. I shall be glad to see Canon Aylwin.'

His face took a pleased meditative look. He was thinking of Canon Aylwin's last volume of essays—of their fine scholarship, their delicate, unique qualities of style. As for Lucy, it seemed to her that all the principalities and powers of this world were somehow arraying themselves against her in that terrible drawing-room they were so soon to enter. She set her teeth, held up her head, and on they went.

Presently they found themselves approaching a glass door, which opened into the central hall. Beyond it was a crowd of figures and a buzz of talk, and at the door stood a tall person in black with white gloves, holding a silver tray, from which he presented David with a button-hole. Then, with a manner at once suave and impersonal, he held open the door, and the husband and wife passed through.

'Ah, my dear Grieve,' said Lord Driffield, laying his hand on David's shoulder, 'come here and be introduced to Canon Aylwin. I am delighted to have caught him for you.'

So David was swept away to the other side of the room, and Lucy was left forlorn and stranded. It seemed to her an immense party; there were at least eight or ten fresh faces beyond those she had seen already. And just as she was looking for a seat into which she might slip and hide herself, Lady Venetia Danby, who was standing near, playing with a huge feather fan and talking to a handsome young man, turned round by chance and, seeing the figure in the bright-coloured 'Watteau *sacque*,' involuntarily put up her eyeglass to look at it. Instantly Lucy, conscious of the eyeglass, and looking hurriedly round on the people near, was certain that the pleat from the shoulder and the mittens were irretrievably wrong and conspicuous, and that she had betrayed herself at once by her dress as an ignoramus and an outsider. Worst of all, the lady in green was in a *sacque* too!—a shapeless yellow thing of the most untutored and detestable make. Mittens also! drawn laboriously over the hands and arms of an Amazon. Lucy glanced at Miss Danby beside her, then at a

beautiful woman in pale pink across the room—at their slim waists, the careless *aplomb* and grace with which the costly stuffs and gleaming jewels were worn, and the white necks displayed—and sank into a chair trembling and miserable. That the only person to keep her in countenance should be that particular person—that they two should thus fall into a class together, by themselves, cut off from all the rest—it was too much! Then, by a quick reaction, some of her natural obstinacy returned upon her. She held herself erect, and looked steadily round the room.

'Mr. Edwardes—Mrs. Grieve,' said Lady Driffield's impassive voice, speaking, as it seemed to Lucy, from a great height, as the tall figure swept past her to introductions more important.

A young man bowed to Lucy, looked at her for a moment, then, pulling his fair moustache, turned away to speak to Miss Danby, who, in the absence of more stimulating suitors for her smiles, was graciously pleased to bestow a few of them on Lord Driffield's new agent.

'Whom are we waiting for?' said Miss Danby, looking round her, and slightly glancing at Lucy.

'Only the Dean, I believe,' said Mr. Edwardes, with a smile. 'I never knew Dean Manley less than half an hour late in *this* house.'

A cold shiver ran through Lucy. Then they—she and David—had been all but the last, had all but kept the whole of this portentous gathering waiting for them.

In the midst of her new tremor the glass doors were again thrown open, and in walked the Dean—a short, plain man, with a mirthful eye, a substantial person, and legs which became his knee-breeches.

'Thirty-five minutes, Dean!' said the handsome youth, who had been talking to Lady Venetia, as he held up his watch.

'It is a remarkable fact, Reggie,' said the Dean, laying his hand on the lad's shoulder, 'that your watch has gained persistently ever since I was first acquainted with you. Ah, well, keep it ahead, my boy. A diplomatist must be egged on somehow.'

'I thought the one condition of success in that trade was the patience to do nothing,' said a charming voice. 'Don't interfere with Reggie's prospects, Dean.'

'Has he got any?' said the Dean, maliciously. 'My dear Mrs. Wellesdon, you are a "sight for sair een."'

And he pressed the new-comer's hand between both his own, surveying her the while with a fatherly affection and admiration.

Lucy looked up, a curious envy at her heart. She saw the beautiful lady in pink, who had come across the room to greet the Dean. *Was* she beautiful? Lucy hurriedly asked herself. Perhaps not, in point of feature, but she held her head so nobly, her colour was so subtle and lovely, her eye so speaking, and her mouth so sweet, she carried about with her a preëminence so natural and human, that beauty was in truth the only word that

fitted her. Now, as the Dean passed on from her to some one else, she glanced down at the little figure in terra-cotta satin, and, with a kindly diffident expression, she sat down and began to talk to Lucy. Marcia Wellesdon was a sorceress, and could win whatever hearts she pleased. In a few moments she so soothed Lucy's nervousness that she even beguiled from her some bright and natural talk about the journey and the house, and Lucy was rapidly beginning to be happy, when the signal for dinner was given, and a general move began.

At dinner Mr. Edwardes bestowed his conversation for a decent space of time—say, during the soup and fish—upon Mrs. Grieve. Lucy, once more ill at ease, tried eagerly to propitiate him by asking innumerable questions about the family, and the pictures, and the estate, it being at once evident that he had an intimate knowledge of all three. But as the family, the pictures, and the estate were always with him, so to speak, made, indeed, a burden which his shoulders had some difficulty in carrying, the attractions of this vein of talk palled on the young agent—who was himself a scion of good family, with his own social ambitions—before long. He decided that Mrs. Grieve was pure middle-class, not at all accustomed to dine in halls of pride, and much agitated by her surroundings. The type did not interest him. She seemed to be asking him to help her out of the mire, and as one does not go into society to be benevolent but to be amused, by the time the first *entrée* was well in he had edged his chair round, and was in animated talk with pretty little Lady Alice Findlay, the daughter of the hook-nosed Lord-Lieutenant of the county, who was seated at Lady Driffield's right hand. Lucy noticed the immediate difference in tone, the easy variety of topic, compared with her own sense of difficulty, and her heart swelled with bitterness.

Then, to her horror, she saw that, from inattention and ignorance of what might be expected, she had allowed the servants to fill every single wineglass of the four standing at her right—positively every one. Sherry, claret, hock, champagne—she was provided with them all. She cast a hurried and guilty eye round the table. Save for champagne, each lady's glasses stood immaculately empty, and when Lucy came back to her own collection she could bear it no longer.

'Mr. Edwardes!' she said hastily, leaning over towards him.

The young man turned abruptly. 'Yes,' he said, looking at her in some surprise.

'Oh, Mr. Edwardes! can you ask some one to take these wineglasses away? I didn't want any, and it looks so—so—dreadful!'

The agent thought that Mrs. Grieve was going to cry. As for himself, his eye twinkled, and he had great difficulty to restrain a burst of laughter. He called a footman near, and Lucy was soon relieved of her fourfold incubus.

'Oh, but you must save the champagne!' he said, and, bending his chair backward, he was about to recall the man, when Lucy stopped him.

'Don't—don't, *please*, Mr. Edwardes!' she said, in an agony.

He lifted his eyebrows good-humouredly, and desisted. Then he asked her if he should give her some water, and when that was done the episode apparently seemed to him closed, for he turned away again, and looked out for fresh opportunities with Lady Alice. Lucy, meanwhile, was left feeling herself even more unsuccessful and more out of place than before, and ready to sink with vexation. And how well David was getting on! There he was, between Mrs. Shepton and the beautiful lady in pink, and he and Mrs. Wellesdon were deep in conversation, his dark head bent gravely towards her, his face melting every now and then into laughter or crossed by some vivid light of assent and pleasure. Lucy's look travelled over the table, the orchids with which it was covered, the lights, the plate, then to the Vandykes behind the guests, and the great mirrors in between—came back to the table, and passed from face to face, till again it rested upon David. The conviction of her husband's handsome looks and natural adequacy to this or any world, with which her survey ended, brought with it a strange mixture of feelings—half pleasure, half bitterness.

'Are you from this part of the world, may I ask?' said a voice at her elbow.

She turned, and saw Colonel Danby, who was tired of devoting himself to the wife of a neighbouring Master of Hounds—a lady with white hair and white eyelashes, always apparently on the point of sleep, even at the liveliest dinner-table—and was now inclined to see what this little provincial might be made of.

'Oh, yes! we are from Manchester,' said Lucy, straightening herself, and preparing to do her best. 'We live in Manchester—at least, of course, not *in* Manchester. No one could do that.'

It was but three years since she had ceased to do it, but new habits of speech grow apace when it is a matter of social prestige. She was terribly afraid lest anybody should now think of them as persons who lived over their shop.

'Ah!—suppose not,' said Colonel Danby, carelessly. 'Land in Manchester, they tell me now, is almost as costly as it is in London.'

Whereat Lucy went off at score, delighted to make Manchester important and to produce her own information. She had an aptitude for business gossip, and she chatted eagerly about the price that So-and-So had paid for their new warehouses, and the sum which report said the Corporation was going to spend on a fine new street.

'And of course many people don't like it. There's always grumbling about the rates. But they should have public spirit, shouldn't they? Are you acquainted with Manchester?' she added, more timidly.

All this time Colonel Danby had been listening with half an ear, and was much more assiduously trying to make up his mind whether the little *bourgeoise* was pretty at all. She had rather a

fine pair of eyes—he supposed she had made that dress in her own back parlour.

'Manchester? I—oh, I have spent a night at the Queen's Hotel now and then,' said the Colonel, with a yawn. 'What do you do there? Do you amuse yourself—eh?'

His smile was not pleasant. He had a florid face, with bad lines round the eyes and a tyrannous mouth. His physical make had been magnificent, but reckless living had brought on the penalties of gout before their time.

Lucy was intimidated by the mixture of familiarity and patronage in the tone.

'Oh, yes,' she said, hurriedly; 'we get all the best companies from the London theatres, and there are *very* good concerts.'

'And that kind of thing amuses you?' said the Colonel, still examining her with the same cool, fixed glance.

'I like music very much,' stammered Lucy, and then fell silent.

'Do you know all these people here?'

'Oh, dear, no!' she cried, feeling the very question malevolent. 'I don't know any of them. My husband wishes to lead a very retired life,' she added, bridling a little, by way of undoing the effect of her admissions.

'And *you* don't wish it?'

The disagreeable eyes smiled again.

'Oh! I don't know,' said Lucy.

Colonel Danby reflected that whatever his companion might be, she was not amusing.

'Have you noticed the gentleman opposite?' he inquired, stifling another yawn.

Lucy timidly looked across.

'It is—it is the Dean of Bradford, isn't it?'

'Yes; it's a comfort, isn't it, when one can know a man by his clothes! Do you see what his deanship has had for dinner?'

Lucy ventured another look, and saw that the Dean had in front of him a plate of biscuits and a glass of water, and that the condition of his knives and forks showed him to have hitherto subsisted on this fare alone.

'Is he so very—so very religious?' she said, wondering.

'A saint in gaiters? Well, I don't know. Probably the saint has dined at one. Do you feel any inclination to be a saint, Mrs. Grieve?'

Lucy could neither meet nor parry the banter of his look. She only blushed.

'I wouldn't attempt it, if I were you,' he said, laughing. 'Those pretty brown eyes weren't meant for it.'

Lucy suddenly felt as though she had been struck, so free and cavalier was the tone. Her cheek took a deeper crimson, and she looked helplessly across at David.

'Little fool!' thought the Colonel. 'But she has certainly some points.'

At that moment Lady Driffield gave the signal, and, with a half-ironical bow to his companion, Colonel Danby rose, picked up her handkerchief for her, and drew his chair aside to let her pass.

Presently Lucy was sitting in a corner of the magnificent green drawing-room, to which Lady Driffield had carelessly led the way. In her vague humiliation and unhappiness, she craved that some one should come and talk to her and be kind to her—even Mrs. Shepton, who had addressed a few pleasant remarks to her on their way from the dining-room. But Mrs. Shepton was absorbed by Lady Driffield, who sat down beside her, and took some trouble to talk. 'Then why not to me?' was Lucy's instinctive thought. For she realised that she and Mrs. Shepton were socially not far apart. Yet Lady Driffield had so far addressed about six words to Mrs. David Grieve, while she was now bending her aristocratic neck to listen to Mrs. Shepton, who was talking entirely at her ease, with her arm round the back of a neighbouring chair, and, as it seemed to Lucy, about politics.

The rest of the ladies, with the exception of the Master of Hounds' wife, who sat in a chair by the fire and dozed, were all either old friends or relations, and they gathered in a group on the Aubusson rug in front of the fire, chatting merrily about their common kindred, the visits they had paid, or were to pay, the fate of their fathers and brothers in the recent election, 'the Duke's' terrible embarrassments, or 'Sir Alfred's' yachting party to Norway, of which little Lady Alice gave a sparkling account.

In her chair on the outskirts of the talkers, Lucy sat painfully turning over the leaves of a costly collection of autographs, which lay on the table near her. Sometimes she tried to interest herself in the splendid room, with its hangings of pale flowered silk, its glass cases, full of historical relics, miniatures, and precious things, representing the long and brilliant past of the house of Driffield, the Sir Joshuas and Romneys, which repeated on the walls the grace and physical perfection of some of the living women below. But she had too few associations with anything she saw to care for it, and, indeed, her mind was too wholly given to her own vague, but overmastering sense of isolation and defeat. If it were only bedtime!

Mrs. Wellesdon glanced at the solitary figure from time to time, but Lady Alice had her arm round 'Marcia's' waist, and kept close hold of her favourite cousin. At last, however, Mrs. Wellesdon drew the young girl with her to the side of Lucy's chair, and, sitting down by the stranger, they both tried to entertain her, and to show her some of the things in the room.

Lucy brightened up at once, and thought them both the most beautiful and fascinating of human beings. But her good fortune was soon over, alas! for the gentlemen came in, and the social elements were once more redistributed. 'Reggie,' the young diplomatist, freshly returned from Berlin, laid hold of his sister

Marcia, and his cousin Lady Alice, and carried them off for a family gossip into a corner of the room, whence peals of young laughter were soon to be heard from him and Lady Alice.

Mr. Edwardes and Colonel Danby passed Mrs. Grieve by, in quest of metal more attractive ; Lord Driffield, the Dean, Canon Aylwin, and David stood absorbed in conversation ; while Lady Driffield transferred her attentions to Mr. Shepton, and the husband of the lady by the fire walked up to her, insisting, somewhat crossly, on waking her. Lucy was once more left alone.

'Lavinia, haven't we done our duty to this apartment?' cried Lord Driffield, impatiently ; 'it always puts me on stilts. The library is ten times more comfortable. I propose an adjournment.'

Lady Driffield shrugged her shoulders, and assented. So the whole party, Lucy timidly attaching herself to Mrs. Shepton, moved slowly through a long suite of beautiful rooms, till they reached the great cedar-fitted library, which was Lord Driffield's paradise. Here was every book to be desired of the scholar to make him wise, and every chair to make him comfortable. Lord Driffield went to one of the bookcases, and took a vellum-bound book, found a passage in it, and showed it to David Grieve. Canon Aylwin and the Dean pressed in to look, and they all fell back into the recess of a great oriel, talking earnestly.

The others passed on into a conservatory beyond the library, where was a billard-table, and many nooks for conversation amid the cunning labyrinths of flowers.

Lucy sank into a cane chair, close to a towering mass of arum lilies, and looked back into the library. Nobody in the conservatory had any thought for her. They were absorbed in each other, and a merry game of pyramids had been already organised. So Lucy watched her husband wistfully.

What a beautiful face was that of Canon Aylwin, with whom he was talking! She could not take her eyes from its long, thin outlines, the apostolic white hair, the eager eyes and quivering mouth, contrasting with the patient courtesy of manner. Yet in her present soreness and heat, the saintly charm of the old man's figure did somehow but depress her the more.

A little after ten it became evident that *nothing* could keep the lady with the white eyelashes out of bed any longer, so the billiard-room party broke up, and, with a few gentlemen in attendance, the ladies streamed into the hall, and possessed themselves of bedroom candlesticks. The great house seemed to be alive with talk and laughter as they strolled upstairs, the girls making dressing-gown appointments in each other's rooms for a quarter of an hour later.

When Lucy reached her own door she stopped awkwardly. Lady Driffield walked on, talking to Marcia Wellesdon. But Marcia looked back :

'Good night, Mrs. Grieve.'

She returned, and pressed Lucy's hand kindly. 'I am afraid you must be tired,' she said ; 'you look so.'

Lady Driffield also shook hands, but, with constitutional *gaucherie*, she did not second Mrs. Wellesdon's remark; she stood by silent and stiff.

'Oh, no, thank you,' said Lucy, hurriedly, 'I am quite well.'

When she had disappeared, the other two walked on.

'What a stupid little thing!' said Lady Driffield. 'The husband may be interesting—Driffield says he is—but I defy anybody to get anything out of the wife.'

It occurred to Marcia that nobody had been very anxious to make the attempt. But she only said aloud:

'I'm sure she is very shy. What a pity she wears that kind of dress! She might be quite pretty in something else.'

Meanwhile Lucy, after shutting the outer door of their little suite behind her, was overtaken as she opened that leading to her own room by a sudden gust of wind coming from a back staircase emerging on to their private passage, which she had not noticed before. The candle was blown out, and she entered the room in complete darkness. She groped for the matches, and found the little stand; but there were none there. She must have used the last in the making of her great illumination before dinner. After much hesitation, she at last summoned up courage to ring the bell, groping her way to it by the help of the light in the passage.

For a long time no one came. Lucy, standing near her own door, seemed to hear two sounds—the angry beating of her own heart, and a murmur of far-off talk and jollity, conveyed to her up the mysterious staircase, which apparently led to some of the servants' quarters.

Fully five minutes passed; then steps were heard approaching, and a housemaid appeared. Lucy timidly asked for fresh matches. The girl said 'Yes, ma'am,' in an off-hand way, looked at Lucy with a somewhat hostile eye, and vanished.

The minutes passed, but no matches were forthcoming. The whirlpool of the lower regions, where the fun was growing uproarious, seemed to have engulfed the messenger. At last Lucy was fain to undress by the help of a glimmer of light from her door left ajar, and after many stumbles and fumblings at last crept, tired and wounded, into bed. This finale seemed to her of a piece with all the rest.

As she lay there in the dark, incident after incident of her luckless evening coming back upon her, her heart grew hungry for David. Nay, her craving for him mounted to jealousy and passion. After all, though he did get on so much better in grand houses than she did, though they were all kind to him and despised her, he was *hers*, her very own, and no one should take him from her. Beautiful Mrs. Wellesdon might talk to him and make friends with him, but he did not belong to any of them, but to *her*, Lucy. She pined for the sound of his step—thought of throwing herself into his arms, and seeking consolation there for the pains of an habitual self-importance crushed beyond bearing.

But when that step was actually heard ouside, her mind veered

in an instant. She had made him come ; he would think she had disgraced him ; he had probably noticed nothing, for a certain absent-mindedness in society had grown upon him of late years. No, she would hold her peace.

So when David, stepping softly and shading his candle, came in, and called 'Lucy' under his breath to see whether she might be awake, Lucy pretended to be sound asleep. He waited a minute, and then went out to change his coat and go down to the smoking-room.

Poor little Lucy ! As she lay there in the dark, the tears dropping slowly on her embroidered pillow, the issue of all her mortification was a new and troubled consciousness about her husband. Why this difference between them ? How was it that he commanded from all who knew him either a warm sympathy or an involuntary respect, while she—

She had gathered from some scraps of the talk round him which had reached her that it was just those sides of his life—those quixotic ideal sides—which were an offence and annoyance to her that touched other people's imagination, opened their hearts. And she had worried and teased him all these years ! Not since the beginning. For, looking back, she could well remember the days when it was still an intoxication that he should have married her, when she was at once in awe of him and foolishly, proudly, happy. But there had come a year when David's profits from his business had amounted to over 2,000*l.*, and when, thanks to a large loan pressed upon him by his Unitarian landlord, Mr. Doyle, he had taken the new premises in Prince's Street. And from that moment Lucy's horizon had changed, her ambitions had hardened and narrowed ; she had begun to be impatient with her husband, first, that he could not make her rich faster, then, after their Tantalus gleam of wealth, that he would put mysterious and provoking obstacles in the way of their getting rich at all.

She meant to keep awake—to wait for him. But she began to think of Sandy. *He* would be glad to see his 'mummy' again ! In fancy she pressed his cheek against her own burning one. He and David were still alive—still hers—it was all right somehow. Consolation began to steal upon her, and in ten minutes she was asleep.

CHAPTER IV

When David came in later, he took advantage of Lucy's sleep to sit up awhile in his own room. He was excited, and any strong impression, in the practical loneliness of his deepest life, always now produced the impulse to write.

'*Midnight.*—Lucy is asleep. I hope she has been happy and they have been kind to her. I saw Mrs. Wellesdon talking to her after dinner. She must have liked that. But *at* dinner she seemed to be sitting silent a good deal.

'What a strange spectacle is this country-house life to anyone bringing to it a fresh and unaccustomed eye! "After all," said Mrs. Wellesdon, "you must admit that the best of anything is worth keeping. And in these country-houses, with all their drawbacks, you do from time to time get the best of social intercourse, a phase of social life as gay, complex, and highly finished as it can possibly be made."

'Certainly this applies to me to-night. When have I enjoyed any social pleasure so much as my talk with her at dinner? When have I been conscious of such stimulus, such exhilaration, as the evening's discussion produced in me? In the one case, Mrs. Wellesdon taught me what general conversation might be—how nimble, delicate, and pleasure-giving; in the other, there was the joy of the intellectual wrestle, mingled with a glad respect for one's opponents. Perhaps nowhere, except on some such ground and in some such circumstances as these, could a debate so earnest have taken quite so wholesome a tone, so wide a range. We were equals—debaters, not controversialists—friends, not rivals—in the quest for truth.

'Yet what drawbacks! This army of servants—which might be an army of slaves without a single manly right, so mute, impassive, and highly trained it is—the breeding of a tyrannous temper in the men, of a certain contempt for facts and actuality even in the best of the women. Mrs. Wellesdon poured out her social aspirations to me. How naïve and fanciful they were! They do her credit, but they will hardly do anyone else much good. And it is evident that they mark her out in her own circle, that they have brought her easily admiration and respect, so that she has never been led to test them, as any one, with the same social interest, living closer to the average realities and griefs of life, must have been led to test them.

'The culture, too, of these aristocratic women, when they are cultured, is so curious. Quite unconsciously and innocently it takes itself for much more than it is, merely by contrast with the *milieu*—the *milieu* of material luxury and complication—in which it moves.

'But I am ungrateful. What a social power in the best sense such a woman might become—a woman so sensitively endowed, so nobly planned!'

David dropped his pen awhile. In the silence of the great house, a silence broken only by the breathings of a rainy autumn wind through the trees outside, his thought took that picture-making intensity which was its peculiar gift. Images of what had been in his own life, and what might have been—the dream of passion which had so deeply marked and modified his manhood—Elise, seen in the clearer light of his richer experience—his married years—the place of the woman in the common life—on these his mind brooded, one by one, till gradually the solemn consciousness of opportunities for ever missed, of failure, of

limitation, evoked another, as solemn, but sweeter and more touching, of human lives irrevocably dependent on his, of the pathetic unalterable claim of marriage, the poverty and hopelessness of all self-seeking, the essential wealth, rich and making rich, of all self-spending. As he thought of his wife and son a deep tenderness flooded the man's whole nature. With a long sigh, it was as though he took them both in his arms, adjusting his strength patiently and gladly to the familiar weight.

Then, by a natural reaction, feeling, to escape itself, passed into speculative reminiscence and meditation of a wholly different kind.

'Our discussion to-night arose from an attack—if anyone so gentle can be said to attack—made upon me by Canon Aylwin, on the subject of those "Tracts on the New Testament"—tracts of mine, of which we have published three, while I have two or three more half done in my writing-table drawer. He said, with a certain nervous decision, that he did not wish to discuss the main question, but he would like to ask me, Could anyone be so sure of supposed critical and historical fact as to be clear that he was right in proclaiming it, when the proclamation of it meant the inevitable disturbance in his fellow-men of conceptions whereon their moral life depended? It was certain that he could destroy; it was most uncertain, even to himself, whether he could do anything else, with the best intentions; and, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, ought not the certainty of doing a moral mischief to outweigh, with any just and kindly mind, the much feebler and less solid certainty he may imagine himself to have attained with regard to certain matters of history and criticism?

'It was the old question of the rights of "heresy," the function of the individual in the long history of thought. We fell into sides: Lord Driffield and I against the Dean and Canon Aylwin. The Dean did not, indeed, contribute much. He sat with his square powerful head bent forward, throwing in a shrewd comment here and there, mainly on the logical course of the argument. But when we came to the main question, as we inevitably did, he withdrew altogether, though he listened.

'"No," he said, "no. I am not competent. It has not been my line in life. I have found more than enough to tax my strength in the practical administration of the goods of Christ. All such questions I leave, and must leave, to experts, such experts as"—and he mentioned the names of some of the leading scholars of the English Church—"or as my friend here," and he laid his hand affectionately on Canon Aylwin's knee.

'Strange! He leaves to experts such questions as those of the independence, authenticity, and trustworthiness of the Gospel records; of the culture and idiosyncrasies of the first two centuries as tending to throw light on those records; of the earliest growth of dogma, as, thanks mainly to German labour, it may now be exhibited within the New Testament itself. In

a Church of private judgment, he takes all this at second hand, after having vowed at his ordination "to be diligent in such studies as help to the knowledge of the Scriptures"!

'Yet a better, a more God-fearing, a more sincere, and, within certain lines, a more acute man than Dean Manley it would certainly be difficult to find at the present time within the English Church. It is an illustration of the dualism in which so many minds tend to live, divided between two worlds, two standards, two wholly different modes of thought—the one applied to religion even in its intellectual aspect, the other applied to all the rest of existence. Yet—is truth divided?

'To return to Canon Aylwin. I could only meet his reproach, which he had a special right to make, for he has taken the kindliest interest in some of the earlier series of our "Workmen's Tracts," by going back to some extent to first principles. I endeavoured to argue the matter on ground more or less common to us both. If both knowledge and morality have only become possible for man by the perpetual action of a Divine spirit on his since the dawn of conscious life; if this action has taken effect in human history, as, broadly speaking, the Canon would admit, through a free and constant struggle of opposites, whether in the realm of interest or the realm of opinion; and if this struggle, perpetually reconciled, perpetually renewed, is the divinely ordered condition, nay, if you will, the sacred task of human life,—how can the Christian, who clings, above all men, to the victory of the Divine in the human, who, moreover, in the course of his history has affronted and resisted all possible "authorities" but that of conscience—how can he lawfully resent the fullest and largest freedom of speech, employed disinterestedly and in good faith, on the part of his brother man? The truth must win; and it is only through the free life of the spirit that she has hitherto prevailed. So much, at least, the English Churchman must hold.

It comes to this: must there be no movement of thought because the individual who lives by custom and convention may at least temporarily suffer? Yet the risks of the individual throughout nature—so far we were agreed—are the correlative of his freedom and responsibility.

'"Ah, well," said the dear old man at last, with a change of expression which went to my heart, so wistful and spiritual it was, "perhaps I have been faithless; perhaps the Christian minister would do better to trust the Lord with His own. But before we leave the subject, let me say, once for all, that I have read all your tracts, and weighed most carefully all that they contain. The matter of them bears on what for me has been the study of many years, and all I can say is that I regard your methods of reasoning as unsound, and your conclusions as wholly false. I have been a literary man from my youth as well as a theologian, and I completely dissent from your literary judgments. I believe that if you had not been already possessed by

a hostile philosophy—which will allow no space for miracle and revelation—you would not have arrived at them. I am old and you are young. Let me bear my testimony while there is time. I have taken a great interest in you and your work."

'He spoke with the most exquisite courtesy and simplicity, his look was dignified and heavenly. I felt like kneeling to ask his blessing, even though he could only give it in the shape of a prayer for my enlightenment.

'But now, alone with conscience, alone with God, how does the matter stand? The challenge of such a life and conviction as Canon Aylwin's is a searching one. It bids one look deep into one's self, it calls one to truth and soberness. What I seem to see is that he and I both approach Christianity with a prepossession, with, as he says, "a philosophy." His is a prepossession in favour of a system of interference from without, by Divine or maleficent powers, for their own ends, with the ordinary sequences of nature—which once covered, one may say, the whole field of human thought and shaped the whole horizon of humanity. From the beginning of history this prepossession —which may be regarded in all its phases as an expression of man's natural impatience to form a working hypothesis of things —has struggled with the "impulse to know." And slowly, irrevocably, from age to age the impulse to know has beaten back the impulse to imagine, has confined the prepossession of faith within narrower and narrower limits, till at last it is even preparing to deny it the guidance of religion, which it has so long claimed. For the impulse of science, justified by the long wrestle of centuries, is becoming itself religious,—and there is a new awe rising on the brow of Knowledge.

'*My* prepossession—but let the personal pronoun be merely understood as attaching me to that band of thinkers, "of all countries, nations, and languages," whose pupil and creature I am—is simply that of science, of the organised knowledge of the race. It is drawn from the whole of experience, it governs without dispute every department of thought, and without it, in fact, neither Canon Aylwin nor I could think at all.

'Moreover, I humbly believe that I desire the same spiritual goods as he : holiness, the knowledge of God, the hope of immortality. But while for him these things are bound up with the maintenance of the older prepossession, for me there is no such connection at all.

'And again, I seem to see that when this intellect of his, so keen, so richly stored, approaches the special ground of Christian thought, it changes in quality. It becomes wholly subordinate to the affections, to the influences of education and habitual surroundings. Talk to him of Dante, of the influence of the barbarian invasions on the culture and development of Europe, of the Oxford movement, you will find in him an historical sense, a delicate accuracy of perception, a luminous variety of statement, which carry you with him into the very heart of the truth. But

discuss with him the critical habits and capacity of those earliest Christian writers, on whose testimony so much of the Christian canon depends—ask him to separate the strata of material in the New Testament, according to their relative historical and ethical value, under the laws which he would himself apply to any other literature in the world—invite him to exclude this as legendary and that as accretion, to distinguish between the original kernel and that which the fancy or the theology of the earliest hearers inevitably added—and you will feel that a complete change has come over the mind. However subtle and precise his arguments may outwardly look, they are at bottom the arguments of affection, of the special pleader. He has fenced off the first century from the rest of knowledge; has invented for all its products alike special *criteria* and a special perspective. He cannot handle the New Testament in the spirit of science, for he approaches it on his knees. The imaginative habit of a lifetime has decided for him; and you ask of him what is impossible.

'"An end must come to scepticism somewhere!" he once said in the course of our talk. "Faith must take her leap—you know as well as I!—if there is to be faith at all."

'Yes, but *where*—at what point? Is the clergyman who talks with sincere distress about infidel views of Scripture and preaches against them, while at the same time he could not possibly give an intelligible account of the problem of the Synoptic Gospels as it now presents itself to the best knowledge, or an outline of the case pressed by science for more than half a century with increasing force and success against the historical character of St. John's Gospel—is he justified in making his ignorance the leaping-point?

'Yet the upshot of all our talk is that I am restless and oppressed.

'. . . I sit and think of these nine years since Berkeley and sorrow first laid hold of me. Berkeley rooted in me the conception of mind as the independent antecedent of all experience, and none of the scientific materialism, which so troubles Ancrum that he will ultimately take refuge from it in Catholicism, affects me. But the ethical inadequacy of Berkeley became very soon plain to me. I remember I was going one day through one of the worst slums of Ancoats, when a passage in his examination of the origin of evil occurred to me:

'"But we should further consider that the very blemishes and defects of nature are not without their use, in that *they make an agreeable sort of variety*, and augment the beauty of the rest of the creation, as shades in a picture serve to set off the brighter and more enlightened parts."

'I had just done my best to save a little timid scarecrow of a child, aged about six, from the blows of its brutal father, who had already given it a black eye—my heart blazed within me,—and from that moment Berkeley had no spell for me.

'Then came that moment when, after my marriage, haunted as I was by the perpetual oppression of Manchester's pain and poverty, the Christian mythology, the Christian theory with all its varied and beautiful flowerings in human life, had for a time an attraction for me so strong that Dora naturally hoped everything, and I felt myself becoming day by day more of an orthodox Christian. What checked the tendency I can hardly now remember in detail. It was a converging influence of books and life—no doubt largely helped, with regard to the details of Christian belief, by the pressure of the German historical movement, as I became more and more fully acquainted with it.

'At any rate, St. Damian's gradually came to mean nothing to me, though I kept, and keep still, a close working friendship with most of the people there. But I am thankful for that Christian phase. It enabled me to realise as nothing else could the strength of the Christian case.

'And since then it has been a long and weary journey through many paths of knowledge and philosophy, till of late years the new English phase of Kantian and Hegelian thought, which has been spreading in our universities, and which is the outlet of men who can neither hand themselves over to authority, like Newman, nor to a scientific materialism, like Clifford and Haeckel, nor to a mere patient nescience in the sphere of metaphysics, like Herbert Spencer, has come to me with an ever-increasing power of healing and edification.

'That the spiritual principle in nature and man exists and governs; that mind cannot be explained out of anything but itself; that the human consciousness derives from a universal consciousness, and is thereby capable both of knowledge and of goodness; that the phenomena and history of conscience are the highest revelation of God; that we are called to co-operation in a divine work, and in spite of pain and sin may find ground for an infinite trust, covering the riddle of the individual lot, in the history and character of that work in man, so far as it has gone—these things are deeper and deeper realities to me. They govern my life; they give me peace; they breathe to me hope.

'But the last glow, the certainties, the *vision*, of faith! Ah! me, I believe that He is there, yet my heart gropes in darkness. All that is personality, holiness, compassion in us, must be in Him intensified beyond all thought. Yet I have no familiarity of prayer. I cannot use the religious language which should be mine without a sense of unreality. My heart is athirst.

'And can religion possibly *depend* upon a long process of thought? How few can think their way to Him—perhaps none, indeed, by the logical intellect alone. He reveals himself to the simple. *Speak to me, to me also, O my Father!*'

Sunday morning broke fresh and golden after a wet night. Lucy lay still in the early dawn, thinking of the day that had to be faced, feeling more cheerful, however, with the refreshment

of sleep, and inclined to hope that she might have got over the worst, and that better things might be in store for her.

So that when David said to her, 'You poor little person, did they eat you up last night—Lady Driffield and her set?' she only answered evasively that Mrs. Wellesdon had been nice, but that Lady Driffield had very bad manners, and she was sure everybody thought so.

To which David heartily assented. Then Lucy put her question:

'Did you think, when you looked at me last night at dinner, that I—that I looked nice?' she said, flushing, yet driven on by an inward smart.

'Of course I did!' David declared. 'Perhaps you should hold yourself up a little more. The women here are so astonishingly straight and tall, like young poplars.'

'Mrs. Wellesdon especially,' Lucy reflected, with a pang.

'But you thought I—had done my hair nicely?' she said desperately.

'Very! And it was the prettiest hair there!' he said, smoothing back the golden brown curls from her temple.

His compliment so delighted her that she dressed and prepared to descend to breakfast with a light heart. She was not often now so happily susceptible to a word of praise from him; she was more exacting than she had once been, but since her acquaintance with Lady Driffield she had been brought low!

And her evil fortune returned upon her, alas, at breakfast, and throughout the day. Breakfast, indeed, seemed to her a more formidable meal than any. For people straggled in, and the ultimate arrangement of the table seemed entirely to depend upon the personal attractiveness of individuals, upon whether they annexed or repelled new-comers. Lucy found herself at one time alone and shivering in the close neighbourhood of Lady Driffield, who was intrenched behind the tea-urn, and after giving her guest a finger, had, Lucy believed, spoken once to her, expressing a desire for scones. The meal itself, with its elaborate cakes and meats and fruits, intimidated Lucy even more than the dinner had done. The breach between it and any small housekeeping was more complete. She felt that she was eating like a school-girl; she devoured her toast dry, out of sheer inability to ask for butter; and, sitting for the most part isolated in the unpopular—that is to say, the Lady Driffield—quarter of the table, went generally half-starved.

As for David, he, with Lord Driffield, Mrs. Wellesdon, Lady Alice, Reggie, and Mrs. Shepton for company at the other end, had on the whole an excellent time. There was, however, one uncomfortable moment of friction between him and Colonel Danby, who had strolled in last of all, with the vicious look of a man who has not had the good night to which he considered himself entitled, and must somehow wreak it on the world.

Just before he entered, Lady Driffield, looking round to see

that the servants had departed, had languidly started the question: 'Does one talk to one's maid? Do you, Marcia, talk to your maid? How can anyone ever find anything to say to one's maid?'

The topic proved unexpectedly interesting. Both Marcia Wellesdon and Lady Alice declared that their maids were their bosom friends. Lady Driffield shrugged her shoulders, then looked at Mrs. Grieve, who had sat silent, opened her mouth to speak, recollected herself, and said nothing. At that moment Colonel Danby entered.

'I say, Danby!' called the young attaché, Marcia's brother, 'do you talk to your valet?'

'Talk to my valet!' said the Colonel, putting up his eye-glass to look at the dishes on the side table—he spoke with suavity, but there was an ominous pucker in the brow—'what should I do that for? I don't pay the fellow for his conversation, I presume, but to button my boots, and precious badly he does it too. I don't even know what his elegant surname is. "Thomas," or "James," or "William" is enough peg for me to hang my orders on. I generally christen them fresh when they come to me.'

Little Lady Alice looked indignant. Lucy caught her husband's face, and saw it suddenly pale, as it easily did under a quick emotion. He was thinking of the valet he had seen at the station standing by the Danbys' luggage—a dark, anxious-looking man, whose likeness to one of the compositors in his own office—a young fellow for whom he had a particular friendship—had attracted his notice.

'Why do you suppose he puts up with you—your servant?' he said, bending across to Colonel Danby. He smiled a little, but his eyes betrayed him.

'Puts up with me!' Colonel Danby lifted his brows, regarding David with an indescribable air of insolent surprise. 'Because I make it worth his while in pounds, shillings, and pence; that's all.'

And he put down his pheasant *salmi* with a clatter, while his wife handed him bread and other propitiations.

'Probably because he has a mother or sister,' said David, slowly. 'We trust a good deal to the patience of our "masters."'

The Colonel stopped his wife's attentions with an angry hand. But just as he was about to launch a reply more congruous with his gout and his contempt for 'Driffield's low-life friends' than with the amenities of ordinary society, and while Lady Venetia was slowly and severely studying David through her eyeglass, Lord Driffield threw himself into the breach with a nervous story of some favourite 'man' of his own, and the storm blew over.

Lady Driffield, indeed, who herself disliked Colonel Danby, as one overbearing person dislikes another, and only invited him because Lady Venetia was her cousin and an old friend, was rather pleased with David's outbreak. After breakfast she graciously asked him if she should show him the picture gallery.

But David was still seething with wrath, and looked at Vandeveldes and De Hoochs and Rembrandts with a distracted eye. Once, indeed, in a little alcove of the gallery hung with English portraits, he woke to a start of interest.

'Imagine that that should be Gray!' he said, pointing to a picture—well known to him through engraving—of a little man in a bob wig, with a turned-up nose and a button chin, and a general air of eager servility. '*Gray*,—one of our greatest poets!' He stood wondering, feeling it impossible to fit the dignity of Gray's verse to the insignificance of Gray's outer man.

'Oh, Gray—a great poet, you think? I don't agree with you. I have always thought the "Night Thoughts" very dull,' said Lady Driffield, sweeping along to the next picture, in a sublime unconsciousness. David smiled—a flash of mirth that cleared his whole look—and was himself again. Moreover he was soon taken possession of by Lord Driffield, and the two disappeared for a happy morning spent between the library and the woods.

Meanwhile Lucy went to church, and had the bliss of feeling that she made one too many in the omnibus, and that, squeeze herself as small as she might, she was still crushing Miss Danby's new dress—a fact of which both mother and daughter were clearly aware. Looking back upon it, Lucy could not remember that for her there had been any conversation going or coming; but it is quite possible that her memory of Benet's Park was even more pronounced than in reality.

David and Lord Driffield came in when lunch was half over, and afterwards there was a general strolling into the garden.

'Are you all right?' said David to his wife, taking her arm affectionately.

'Oh yes, thank you,' she said hurriedly, perceiving that Reggie Calvert was coming up to her. 'I'm all right. Don't take my arm, David. It looks so odd.'

And she turned delightedly to talk to the young diplomatist, who had the kindliness and charm of his race, and devoted himself to her very prettily for a while, though they had great difficulty in finding topics, and he was coming finally to the end of his resources when Lady Driffield announced that 'the carriage would be round in half an hour.'

'Goodness gracious! then I must write some letters first,' he said, with the importance of the budding ambassador, and ran into the house.

The others seemed to melt away—David and Canon Aylwin strolling off together—and soon Lucy found herself alone. She sat down in a seat round which curved a yew hedge, and whence there was a somewhat wide view over a bare, hilly country, with suggestions everywhere of factory life in the hollows, till on the southwest it rose and melted into the Derbyshire moors. Autumn—late autumn—was on all the reddening woods and in the cool sunshine; but there was a bright border of sunflowers and dahlias near, which no frost had yet touched, and the gaiety both of the

flowers and of the clear blue distance forbade as yet any thought of winter.

Lucy's absent and discontented eye saw neither flowers nor distance; but it was perforce arrested before long by the figure of Mrs. Shepton, who came round the corner of the yew hedge.

'Have they gone?' said that lady.

'Who?' said Lucy, startled. 'I heard a carriage drive off just now, I think.'

'Ah! then they *are* gone. Lady Driffield has carried off all her friends—except Mrs. Wellesdon, who, I believe, is lying down with a headache—to tea at Sir Wilfrid Herbart's. You see the house there'—and she pointed to a dim, white patch among woods, about five miles off. 'It is not very civil of a hostess, perhaps, to leave her guests in this way. But Lady Driffield is Lady Driffield.'

Mrs. Shepton laughed, and threw back the flapping green gauze veil with which she generally shrouded a freckled and serviceable complexion, in no particular danger, one would have thought, of spoiling.

Lucy instinctively looked round to see how near they were to the house, and whether there were any windows open.

'It must be very difficult, I should think, to be—to be friends with Lady Driffield.'

She looked up at Mrs. Shepton with the childish air of one both hungry for gossip and conscious of the naughtiness of it.

Mrs. Shepton laughed again. She had never seen anyone behave worse, she reflected, than Lady Driffield to this little Manchester person, who might be uninteresting, but was quite inoffensive.

'Friends! I should think so. An armed neutrality is all that pays with Lady Driffield. I have been here many times, and I can now keep her in order perfectly. You see, Lady Driffield has a brother whom she happens to be fond of—everybody has some soft place—and this brother is a Liberal member down in our West Riding part of the world. And my husband is the editor of a paper that possesses a great deal of political influence in the brother's constituency. We have backed him up through this election. He is not a bad fellow at all, though about as much of a Liberal at heart as this hedge,' and Mrs. Shepton struck it lightly with the parasol she carried. 'My husband thinks we got him in—by the skin of his teeth. So Lady Driffield asks us periodically, and behaves herself, more or less. My husband likes Lord Driffield. So do I; and an occasional descent upon country houses amuses me. It especially entertains me to make Lady Driffield talk politics.'

'She must be very Conservative,' said Lucy, heartily. Conservatism stood in her mind for the selfish exclusiveness of big people. Her father had always been a bitter Radical.

'Oh dear no—not at all! Lady Driffield believes herself an advanced Liberal; that is the comedy of it. *Liberals!*' cried

Mrs. Shepton, with a sudden bitterness, which transformed the broad, plain, sleepy face. 'I should like to set her to work for a year in one of those mills down there. She might have some politics worth having by the end of it.'

Lucy looked at her in amazement. Why, the mill people were very happy—most of them.

'Ah well!' said Mrs. Shepton, recovering herself, 'what we have to do—we intelligent middle class—for the next generation or two, is to *drive* these aristocrats. Then it will be seen what is to be done with them finally. Well, Mrs. Grieve, we must amuse ourselves. *Au revoir!* My husband has some writing to do, and I must go and help him.'

She waved her hand and disappeared, sweeping her green and yellow skirts behind her with an air as though Benet's Park were already a seminary for the correction of the great.

Lucy sat on pondering till she felt dull and cold, and decided to go in. On finding her way back she passed round a side of the house which she had not yet seen. It was the oldest part of the building, and the windows, which were mullioned and narrow, and at some height from the ground, looked out upon a small bowling-green, closely walled in from the rest of the gardens and the park by a thick screen of trees. She lingered along the path looking at a few late roses which were still blooming in this sheltered spot against the wall of the house, when she was startled by the sound of her own name, and, looking up, she saw that there was an open window above her. The temptation was too great. She held her breath and listened.

'Lord Driffield says he married her when he was quite young, that accounts for it.' Was not the voice Lady Alice's? 'But it is a pity that she is not more equal to him. I never saw a more striking face, did you? Yet Lord Driffield says he is not as good-looking as he promised to be as a boy. I wish we had been there last night after dinner, Marcia! They say he gave Colonel Danby such a dressing about some workmen's question. Colonel Danby was laying down the law about strikes in his usual way—he *is* an odious creature!—and wishing that the Government would just send an infantry regiment into the middle of the Yorkshire miners that are on strike now, when Mr. Grieve fired up. And everybody backed him. Reggie told me it was splendid; he never saw a better shindy. It is a pity about her. Everybody says he might have a great career if he pleased. And she can't be any companion to him.—Now, Marcia, you know your head *is* better, so don't say it isn't! Why, I have used a whole bottle of eau de Cologne on you.'

So chattered pretty, kindly Lady Alice, sitting with her back to the window beside Marcia Wellesdon. Lucy stood still a moment, could not hear what Mrs. Wellesdon said languidly in answer, then crept on, her lip quivering.

From then till long after the dark had fallen she was quite alone. David, coming back from a long walk, and tea at the

agent's house on the further edge of the estate, found his wife lying on her bed, and the stars beginning to look in upon her through the unshuttered windows.

'Why, Lucy! aren't you well, dear?' he said, hurrying up to her.

'Oh yes, very well, thank you,' she said, in a constrained voice. 'My head aches rather.'

'Who has been looking after you?' he said, instantly reproaching himself for the enjoyment of his own afternoon.

'I have been here since three o'clock.'

'And nobody gave you any tea?' he asked, flushing.

'No, I went down, but there was nobody in the drawing-room. I suppose the footman thought nobody was in.'

'Where was Lady Driffield?'

'Oh! she and most of them went out to tea—to a house a good way off.'

Lucy's tone was dreariness itself. David sat still, his breath coming quickly. Then suddenly Lucy turned round and drew him down to her passionately.

'When can we get home? Is there an early train?'

Then David understood. He took her in his arms, and she broke down and cried, sobbing out a catalogue of griefs that was only half coherent. But he saw at once that she had been neglected and slighted, nay more, that she had been somehow wounded to the quick. His clasped hand trembled on his knee. This was hospitality! He had gauged Lady Driffield well.

'An early train?' he said, with frowning decision. 'Yes, of course. There is to be an eight o'clock breakfast for those who want to get off. We shall be home by a little after nine. Cheer up, darling. I will look after you to-night—and think of Sandy to-morrow!'

He laid his cheek tenderly against hers, full of a passion of resentment and pity. As for her, the feeling with which she clung to him was more like the feeling she had first shown him on the Wakely moors, than anything she had known since.

'Sandy! why don't you say good morning, sir?' said David next morning, standing on the threshold of his own study, with Lucy just behind. His face was beaming with the pleasures of home.

Sandy, who was lying curled up in David's arm-chair, looked sleepily at his parents. His thumb was tightly wedged in his mouth, and with the other he held pressed against him a hideous rag doll, which had been presented to him in his cradle.

'Jane's asleep,' he said, just removing his thumb for the purpose, and then putting it back again.

'Heartless villain!' said David, taking possession of both him and Jane. 'And do you mean to say you aren't glad to see Daddy and Mammy?'

'Zes—but Sandy's *so* fond of childwen,' said Sandy, cuddling Jane up complacently, and subsiding into his father's arms.

Husband and wife laughed into each other's eyes. Then Lucy knelt down to tie the child's shoe, and David, first kissing the boy, bent forward and laid another kiss on the mother's hair.

CHAPTER V

'An exciting post,' said David to Lucy one morning as she entered the dining-room for breakfast. 'Louie proposes to bring her little girl over to see us, and Ancrum will be home to-night!'

'Louie!' repeated Mrs. Grieve, standing still in her amazement. 'What do you mean?'

It was certainly unexpected. David had not heard from Louie for more than six months; his remittances to her, however, were at all times so casually acknowledged that he had taken no particular notice; and he and she had not met for two years and more—since that visit to Paris, in fact, recorded in his journal.

'It is quite true,' said David; 'it seems to be one of her sudden schemes. I don't see any particular reason for it. She says she must "put matters before" me, and that Cécile wants a change. I don't see that a change to Manchester in February is likely to help the poor child much. No, it must mean more money. We must make up our minds to that,' said David with a little sad smile, looking at his wife.

'David! I don't see that you're called to do it at all!' cried Lucy. 'Why, you've done much more for her than anybody else would have done! What they do with the money I can't think—dreadful people!'

She began to pour out the tea with vehemence and an angry lip. She had always in her mind that vision of Louie, as she had seen her for the first and only time in her life, marching up Market Place in the 'loud' hat and the black and scarlet dress, stared at and staring. Nor had she ever lost her earliest impression of strong dislike which had come upon her immediately afterwards, when Louie and Reuben had mounted to Dora's sitting-room, and she, Lucy, had angrily told the quick-fingered, bold-eyed girl who claimed to be David Grieve's sister not to touch Dora's work. Nay, every year since had but intensified it, especially since their income had ceased to expand rapidly, and the drain of the Montjoies' allowance had been more plainly felt. She might have begun to feel a little ashamed of herself that she was able to give her husband so little sympathy in his determination to share his gains with his co-workers. She was quite clear that she was right in resenting the wasting of his money on such worthless people as the Montjoies. It was disgusting that they should sponge upon them so—and with hardly a 'thank you' all the time. Oh dear, no!—Louie took everything as her right, and had once abused David through four pages because his cheque had been two days late.

David received his wife's remarks in a meditative silence. He

devoted himself a while to Sandy, who was eating porridge at his right hand, and tended with great regularity to bestow on his pinafore what was meant for his mouth. At last he said, pushing the letter over to Lucy:

'You had better read it, Lucy. She talks of coming next week.'

Lucy read it with mounting wrath. It was the outcome of a fit of characteristic violence. Louie declared that she could stand her life no longer; that she was coming over to put things before David; and if he couldn't help her, she and her child would just go out and beg. She understood from an old Manchester acquaintance whom she had met in the Rue de Rivoli about Christmas-time that David was doing very well with his business. She wished him joy of it. If he was prosperous, it was more than she was. Nobody ever seemed to trouble their heads about her.

'Well, I never!' said Lucy, positively choked. 'Why, it's not much more than a month since you sent her that last cheque, And now I know you'll be saying you can't afford yourself a new great-coat. It's disgraceful! They'll suck you dry, those kind of people, if you let them.'

She had taken no pains so far to curb her language for the sake of her husband's feelings. But as she gave vent to the last acid phrase she felt a sudden compunction. For David was looking straight before him into vacancy, with a painful intensity in the eyes, and a curious droop and contraction of the mouth. Why did he so often worry himself about Louie? *He* had done all he could, anyway.

She got up and went over to him with his tea. He woke up from his absorption and thanked her.

'Is it right?'

'Just right!' he said, tasting it. 'All the same, Lucy, it would be really nice of you to be kind to her and poor little Cécile. It won't be easy for either of us having Louie here.'

He began to cut up his bread with sudden haste, then, pausing again, he went on in a low voice. 'But if one leaves a task like that undone it makes a sore spot, a fester in the mind.'

She went back to the place in silence.

'What day is it to be?' she said presently. Certainly they both looked dejected.

'The 16th, isn't it? I wonder who the Manchester acquaintance was. He must have given a rose-coloured account. We aren't so rich as all that, are we, wife?'

He glanced at her with a charming half-apprehensive smile, which made his face young again. Lucy looked ready to cry.

'I know you'll get out of buying that coat,' she said with energy, as though referring to an already familiar topic of discussion between them.

'No, I won't,' said David cheerfully. 'I'll buy it before Louie comes, if that will please you. Oh, we shall do, dear! I've had a real good turn at the shop this last month. Things will look better this quarter's end, you'll see.'

'Why, I thought you'd been so busy in the printing office,' she said, a good deal cheered, however, by his remark.

'So we have. But John's a brick, and doesn't care how much he does. And the number of men who take a personal interest in the house, who do their utmost to forward work, and to prevent waste and scamping, is growing fast. When once we get the apprentices' school into full working order, we shall see.'

David gave himself a great stretch; and then, thrusting his hands deep into his pockets, stood by the fire enjoying it and his dreams together.

'Has it begun?' said Lucy. Her tone was not particularly cordial; but anyone who knew them well would perhaps have reflected that six months before he would have neither made his remark, nor she have asked her question.

'Yes—what?' he said with a start. 'Oh, the school! It has begun tentatively. Six of our best men give in rotation two hours a day to it at the time when work and the machines are slackest. And we have one or two teachers from outside. Twenty-three boys have entered. I have begun to pay them a penny a day for attendance.'

His face lit up with merriment as though he anticipated her remonstrance.

'David, how foolish! If you coax them like that they won't care a bit about it.'

'Well, the experiment has been tried by a great French firm,' he said, 'and it did well. It is really a slight addition to wages, and pays the firm in the end. You should see the little fellows hustle up for their money. I pay it them every month.'

'And it all comes out of *your* pocket—that, of course, I needn't ask,' said Lucy. But her sarcasm was not bitter, and she had a motherly eye the while to the way in which Sandy was stuffing himself with his bread and jam.

'Well,' he said, laughing and making no attempt to excuse himself, 'but I tell you, madam, you will do better this year. I positively must make some money out of the shop for you and myself too. So I have been going at it like twenty horses, and we've sent out a splendid catalogue.'

'Oh, I say, David!' said Lucy, dismayed, 'you're not going to take the shop-money too to spend on the printing?'

'I won't take anything that will leave you denuded,' he said affectionately; 'and whenever I want anything I'll tell you all about it—if you like.'

He looked at her significantly. She did not answer for a minute, then she said:

'Don't you want me to give those boys a treat some time?'

'Yes, when the weather gets more decent, if it ever does. We must give them a day on the moors—take them to Clough End perhaps. Oh, look here!' he exclaimed with a sudden change of tone, 'let us ask Uncle Reuben to come and spend the day to see Louie!'

'Why, he won't leave *her*,' said Lucy.

'Who? Aunt Hannah? Oh yes, he will. It's wonderful what she can do now. I saw her in November, you remember, when I went to see Margaret. It's a resurrection. Poor Uncle Reuben!'

'What do you mean?' said Lucy, startled.

'Well,' said David slowly, with a half tender, half humorous twist of the lip, 'he can't understand it. He prayed so many years, and it made no difference. Then came a new doctor, and with electricity and rubbing it was all done. Oh yes, Uncle Reuben would like to see Louie. And I want to show him that boy there!'

He nodded at Sandy, who sat staring open-mouthed and open-eyed at his parents, a large piece of bread and jam slipping slowly down his throat.

'David, you're silly,' said Lucy. But she went to stand by him at the fire, and slipped her hand inside his arm. 'I suppose she and Cécile had better have the front room,' she went on slowly.

'Yes, that would be the most cheerful.'

Then they were silent a little, he leaning his head lightly against hers.

'Well, I must go,' he said, rousing himself; 'I shall just catch the train. Send a line to Ancrum, there's a dear, to say I will go and see him to-night. Four months! I am afraid he has been very bad.'

Lucy stood by the fire a little, lost in many contradictory feelings. There was in her a strange sense as of some long strain slowly giving way, the quiet melting of some old hardness. Ever since that autumn time when, after their return from Benet's Park, her husband's chivalry and delicacy of feeling had given back to her the self-respect and healed the self-love which had been so rudely hurt, there had been a certain readjustment of Lucy's nature going on below the little commonplaces and vanities and affections of her life which she herself would never have been able to explain. It implied the gradual abandonment of certain ambitions, the relinquishment bit by bit of an arid and fruitless effort.

She would stand and sigh sometimes—long, regretful sighs like a child—for she knew not what. But David would have his way, and it was no good; and she loved him and Sandy.

But she owed no love to Louie Montjoie! It was a relief to her now—an escape from an invading sweetness of which her little heart was almost afraid—to sit down and plan how she would protect David from that grasping woman and her unspeakable husband.

'David, my dear fellow!' said Ancrum's weak voice.

He rose with difficulty from his seat by the fire. The room was the same little lodging-house sitting-room in Mortimer Road,

where David years before had poured out his boyish account of himself. Neither chiffonnier, nor pictures, nor antimacassars had changed at all; the bustling landlady was still loud and vigorous. But Ancrum was a shadow.

'You are better?' David said, holding his hand in both his.

'Oh yes, better for a time. Not for long, thank God!'

David looked at him with painful emotion. Several times during these eight years had he seen Ancrum emerge from these mysterious crises of his, a broken and shattered man, whom only the force of a superhuman will could drag back to life and work. But he had never yet seen him so beaten down, so bloodless, so emaciated as this. Lung mischief had declared itself more than a year before this date, and had clearly made progress during this last attack of melancholia. He thought to himself that his old friend could not have long to live.

'Has Williams been to see you?' he asked, naming a doctor whom Ancrum had long known and trusted.

'Oh yes! He can do nothing. He tells me to give in and go to the south. But there is a little work left in me still. I wanted my boys. I grew to pine for my boys—up there.'

'Up there' meant that house in Scotland where lived the friends bound to him by such tragic memories of help asked and rendered in a man's worst extremity, that he could never speak of them when he was living his ordinary life in Manchester, passionately as he loved them.

They chatted a little about the boys, some of whom David had been keeping an eye on. Five or six of them, indeed, were in his printing-office, and learning in the apprentices' school he had just started.

But in the middle of their talk, with a sudden change of look, Ancrum stooped forward and laid his hand on David's.

'A little more, Davy—I have just to get a *little* worse—and *she* will come to me.'

David was not sure that he understood. Ancrum had only spoken of his wife once since the night when, led on by sympathy and emotion, he had met David's young confession by the story of his own fate. She was still teaching at Glasgow so far as David knew, where she was liked and respected.

'Yes, Davy—when I have come to the end of my tether—when I can do no more but die—I shall call—and she will come. It has so far killed us to be together—more than a few hours in the year. But when life is all over for me—she will be kind—and I shall be able to forget it all. Oh, the hours I have sat here thinking—thinking—and *gnashing my teeth!* My boys think me a kind, gentle, harmless creature, Davy. They little know the passions I have carried within me—passions of hate and bitterness—outcries against God and man. But there has been One with me through the storms'—his voice sank—'aye! and I have gone to Him again and again with the old cry—*Master!—Master!—carest Thou not that we perish?*'

His drawn grey face worked and he mastered himself with difficulty. David held his hand firm and close in a silence which carried with it a love and sympathy not to be expressed.

'Let me just say this to you, Davy,' Ancrum went on presently, 'before we shut the door on this kind of talk—for when a man has got a few things to do and very little strength to do 'em with, he must not waste himself. You may hear any day that I have been received into the Catholic Church, or you may only hear it when I am dying. One way or the other, you *will* hear it. It has been strange to go about all these years among my Unitarian and dissenting friends and to know that this would be the inevitable end of it. I have struggled alone for peace and certainty. I cannot get them for myself. There is an august, an inconceivable possibility which makes my heart stand still when I think of it, that the Catholic Church may verily have them to give, as she says she has. I am weak—I shall submit—I shall throw myself upon her breast at last.'

'But why not now,' said David, tenderly, 'if it would give you comfort?'

Ancrum did not answer at once; he sat rubbing his hands restlessly over the fire.

'I don't know—I don't know,' he said at last. 'I have told you what the end will be, Davy. But the will still flutters—flutters—in my poor breast, like a caged thing.'

Then that beautiful half-wild smile of his lit up the face.

'Bear with me, you strong man! What have you been doing with yourself? How many more courts have you been pulling down? And how much more of poor Madam Lucy's money have you been throwing out of window?'

He took up his old tone, half bantering, half affectionate, and teased David out of the history of the last six months. While he sat listening he reflected once more, as he had so often reflected, upon the difference between the reality of David Grieve's life as it was and his, Ancrum's, former imaginations of what it would be. A rapid rise to wealth and a new social status, removal to London, a great public career, a personality, and an influence conspicuous in the eyes of England—all these things he had once dreamed of as belonging to the natural order of David's development. What he had actually witnessed had been the struggle of a hidden life to realise certain ideal aims under conditions of familiar difficulty and limitation, the dying down of that initial brilliance and passion to succeed, into a wrestle of conscience as sensitive as it was profound, as tenacious as it was scrupulous. He had watched an unsatisfactory marriage, had realised the silent resolve of the north-countryman to stand by his own people, of the man sprung from the poor to cling to the poor: he had become familiar with the veins of melancholy by which both character and life were crossed. That glittering prince of circumstance as he had once foreseen him, was still enshrined in memory and fancy; but the real man was knit to the cripple's inmost heart.

Another observer, perhaps, might have wondered at Ancrum's sense of difference and disillusion. For David after all had made a mark. As he sat talking to Ancrum of the new buildings behind the printing-office where he now employed from two to three hundred men, of the ups and downs of his profit-sharing experiences, of this apprentices' school for the sons of members of the 'house,' imitated from one of the same kind founded by a great French printing firm, and the object just now of a passionate energy of work on David's part—or as he diverged into the history of an important trade dispute in Manchester, where he had been appointed arbitrator by the unanimous voice of both sides—as he told these things, it was not doubtful even for Ancrum that his power and consideration were spreading in his own town.

But, substantially, Ancrum was right. Hard labour and natural gift had secured their harvest; but that vivid personal element in success which captivates and excites the bystander seemed, in David's case, to have been replaced by something austere, which pointed attention and sympathy rather to the man's work than to himself. When he was young there had been intoxication for such a spectator as Ancrum in the magical rapidity and ease with which he seized opportunity and beat down difficulty. Now that he was mature, he was but one patient toiler the more at the eternal puzzles of our humanity.

Ancrum let him talk awhile. He had always felt a certain interest in David's schemes, though they were not of a quality and sort with which a mind like his naturally concerned itself. But his interest now could not hold out so long as once it could.

'Ah, that will do—that will do, dear fellow!' he said, interrupting and touching David's hand with apologetic affection. 'I seem to feel your pulse beating 150 to the minute, and it tires me so I can't bear myself. Gossip to me. How is Sandy?'

David laughed, and had as usual a new batch of 'Sandiana' to produce. Then he talked of Louie's coming and of the invitation which had been sent to Reuben Grieve.

'I shall come and sit in a corner and look at *her*,' said Ancrum, nodding at Louie's name. 'What sort of a life has she been leading all these years? Neither you nor I can much imagine. But what beauty it used to be! How will John stand seeing her again?'

David smiled, but did not think it would affect John very greatly. He was absorbed in the business of Grieve & Co., and no less round, roseate, and trusty than he had always been.

'Well, good night—good night!' said Ancrum, and seemed to be looking at the clock uneasily. 'Come again, Davy, and I dare say I shall struggle up to you.'

At that moment the door opened, and, in spite of a hasty shout from Ancrum, which she did not or would not understand, Mrs. Elsley, his landlady, came into the room, bearing his supper. She put down the tray, seemed to invite David's attention to it by her

indignant look, and flounced out again like one bursting with forbidden speech.

'Ancrum, this is absurd!' cried David, pointing to the tea and morsel of dry bread which were to provide this shrunken invalid with his evening meal. 'You *can't* live on this stuff now, you know—you want something more tempting and more nourishing. Do be rational!'

Ancrum sprang up, hobbled with unusual alacrity across the room, and, laying hold of David, made a feint of ejecting his visitor.

'You get along and leave me to my wittles!' he said with the smile of a schoolboy; 'I don't spy on you when you're at your meals.'

David crossed his arms.

'I shall have to send Lucy down every morning to housekeep with Mrs. Elsley,' he said firmly.

'Now, David, hold your tongue! I couldn't eat anything else if I tried. And there are two boys down with typhoid in Friar's Yard—drat 'em!—and scarcely a rag on 'em: don't you understand? And besides, David, if *she* comes, I shall want a pound or two, you see?'

He did not look at his visitor's face nor let his own be seen. He simply pushed David through the door and shut it.

'Sandy, they're just come!' cried Lucy in some excitement, hugging the child to her by way of a last pleasant experience before the advent of her sister-in-law. Then she put the child down on the sofa and went out to meet the new-comers.

Sandy sucked a meditative thumb, putting his face to the window, and surveyed the arrival which was going on in the front garden. There was a great deal of noise and talking; the lady in the grey cloak was scolding the cabman, and 'Daddy' was taking her bags and parcels from her, and trying to make her come in. On the steps stood a little girl looking frightened and tired. Sandy twisted his head round and studied her carefully. But he showed no signs of running out to meet her. She might be nice, or she might be nasty. Sandy had a cautious philosophical way with him towards novelties. He remained perfectly still with his cheek pressed against the glass.

The door opened. In came Louie, with Lucy looking already flushed and angry behind her, and David, last of all, holding Cécile by the hand.

Louie was in the midst of denunciations of the cabman, who had, according to her, absorbed into his system, or handed over to an accomplice on the way, a bandbox which had *certainly* been put in at St. Pancras, and which contained Cécile's best hat. She was red and furious, and David felt himself as much attacked as the cabman, for to the best of his ability he had transferred them and their packages, at the Midland station, from the train to the cab.

In the midst of her tirade, however, she suddenly stopped

short and looked round the room she had just entered—Lucy's low comfortable sitting-room, with David's books overflowing into every nook and corner, the tea-table spread, and the big fire which Lucy had been nervously feeding during her time of waiting for the travellers.

'Well, you've got a fire, anyway,' she said, brusquely. 'I thought you'd have a bigger house than this by now.'

'Oh, thank you, it's quite big enough!' cried Lucy, going to the tea-table and holding herself very straight. '*Quite* big enough for anything *we* want! Will you take your tea?'

Louie threw herself into an armchair and looked about her.

'Where's the little boy?' she inquired.

'I'm here,' said a small solemn voice from behind the sofa, 'but I'm not *your* boy.'

And Sandy, discovered with his back to the window, replaced the thumb which he had removed to make the remark, and went on staring with portentous gravity at the new-comers. Cécile had nervously disengaged herself from David and was standing by her mother.

'Why, he's small for his age!' exclaimed Louie; 'I'm sure he's small for his age. Why, he's nearly five!'

'Come here, Sandy,' said David, 'and let your aunt and cousin look at you.'

Sandy reluctantly sidled across the room so as to keep as far as possible from his aunt and cousin, and fastened on his father's hand. He and the little girl looked at one another.

'Go and kiss her,' said David.

Sandy most unwillingly allowed himself to be put forward. Cécile with a little patronising woman-of-the-world air stooped and kissed him first on one cheek and then on the other. Louie only looked at him. Her black eyes—no less marvellous than of yore, although now the brilliancy of them owed something to art as well as nature, as Lucy at once perceived—stared him up and down, taking stock minutely.

'He's well made,' she said grudgingly, 'and his colour isn't bad. Cécile, take your hat off.'

The child obeyed, and the mother with hasty fingers pulled her hair forward here, and put it back there. 'Look at the thickness of it,' she said, proudly pointing it out to David. 'They'd have given me two guineas for it in the Rue de la Paix the other day. Why didn't that child have your hair, I wonder?' she added, nodding towards Sandy.

'Because he preferred his mother's, I suppose,' said David, smiling at Lucy, and wondering through his discomfort what Sandy could possibly be doing with his coat-tail. He seemed to be elaborately scrubbing his face with it.

'What are you doing with my coat, villain?' he said, lifting his son in his arms.

Sandy found his father's ear, and with infinite precaution whispered vindictively into it:

'I've wiped *them* kisses off anyhow.'

David suppressed him, and devoted himself to the travellers and their tea.

Every now and then he took a quiet look at his sister. Louie was in some ways more beautiful than ever. She carried herself magnificently, and as she sat at the tea-table—restless always—she fell unconsciously into one fine attitude after another, no doubt because of her long practice as a sculptor's model. All the girl's awkwardness had disappeared; she had the insolent ease which goes with tried and conscious power. But with the angularity and thinness of first youth had gone also that wild and startling radiance which Montjoie had caught and fixed in the Mænad statue—the one enduring work of a ruined talent, now to be found in the Luxembourg by anyone who cares to look for it. Her beauty was less original; it had taken throughout the second-rate Parisian stamp; she had the townswoman's pallor, as compared with the moorland red and white of her youth; and round the eyes and mouth in a full daylight were already to be seen the lines which grave the history of passionate and selfish living.

But if her beauty was less original, it was infinitely more finished. Lucy beside her stumbled among the cups, and grew more and more self-conscious; she had felt much the same at Benet's Park beside Lady Venetia Danby; only here there was a strong personal animosity and disapproval fighting with the disagreeable sense of being outshone.

She left almost all the talk to her husband, and employed herself in looking after Cécile. David, who had left his work with difficulty to meet his sister, did his best to keep her going on indifferent subjects, wondering the while what it was that she had come all this way to say to him, and perfectly aware that her sharp eyes were in every place, taking a depreciatory inventory of his property, his household, and his circumstances.

Suddenly Louie said something to Cécile in violent French. It was to the effect that she was to hold herself up and not stoop like an idiot.

The child, who was shyly eating her tea, flushed all over, and drew herself up with painful alacrity. Louie went on with a loud account of the civility shown her by some gentlemen on the Paris boat and on the journey from Dover. In the middle of it she stopped short, her eye flamed, she bent forward with the rapidity of a cat that springs, and slapped Cécile smartly on the right cheek.

'I was watching you!' she cried. 'Are you never going to obey me—do you think I am going to drag a hunchback about with me?'

Both David and Lucy started forward. Cécile dropped her bread and butter and began to cry in a loud, shrill voice, hitting out meanwhile at her mother with her tiny hands in a frenzy of rage and fear. Sandy, frightened out of his wits, set up a loud howl also, till his mother caught him up and carried him away.

'Louie, the child is tired out!' said David, trying to quiet Cécile and dry her tears. 'What was that for?'

Louie's chest heaved.

'Because she won't do what I tell her,' she said fiercely. 'What am I to do with her when she grows up? Who'll ever look at her twice?'

She scowled at the child who had taken refuge on David's knee, then with a sudden change of expression she held out her arms, and said imperiously:

'Give her to me.'

David relinquished her, and the mother took the little trembling creature on her knee.

'Be quiet then,' she said to her roughly, always in French, 'I didn't hurt you. There! *Veux-tu du gâteau?*'

She cut some with eager fingers and held it to Cécile's lips. The child turned away, silently refusing it, the tears rolling down her cheeks. The mother devoured her with eyes of remorse and adoration, while her face was still red with anger.

'*Dis-moi*, you don't feel anything?' she said, kissing her hungrily. 'Are you tired? Shall I carry you upstairs and put you on the bed to rest?'

And she did carry her up, not allowing David to touch her. When they were at last safe in their own room, David came down to his study and threw himself into his chair in the dark with a groan.

CHAPTER VI

Louie and her child entered the sitting-room together when the bell rang for supper-tea. Louie had put on a high red silk dress of a brilliant, almost scarlet, tone, which showed her arms from the elbows and was very slightly clouded here and there with black; Cécile crept beside her, a little pale shadow, in a white muslin frock, adorned, however, as Lucy's vigilant eyes immediately perceived, with some very dainty and expensive embroidery. The mother's dress reminded her of that in which she first saw Louie Grieve; so did her splendid and reckless carriage; so did the wild play of her black eyes, always on the watch for opportunities of explosion and offence. How did they get their dresses? Who paid for them? And now they had come over to beg for more! Lucy could hardly keep a civil tongue in her head at all, as her sister-in-law swept round the room making strong and, to the mistress of the house, cutting remarks on the difference between 'Manchester dirt' and the brightness and cleanliness of Paris. Why, she lorded it over them as though the place belonged to her! 'And she is just a pauper—living on what we give her!' thought Lucy to herself with exasperation.

After supper, at which Louie behaved with the same indefinable insolence—whether as regarded the food or the china, or the shaky moderator lamp, a relic from David's earliest bachelor

days, which only he could coax into satisfactory burning—Lucy made the move, and said to her with cold constraint:

'Will you come into the drawing-room?—David has a pipe in the study after dinner.'

'I want to speak to David,' said Louie, pushing back her chair with noisy decision. 'I'll go with him. He can smoke as much as he likes—I'm used to it.'

'Well, then, come into my study,' said David, trying to speak cheerfully. 'Lucy will look after Cécile.'

To Louie's evident triumph Cécile made difficulties about going with her aunt, but was at last persuaded by the prospect of seeing Sandy in bed. She had already shown signs in her curious frightened way of a considerable interest in Sandy.

Then David led the way to the study. He put his sister into his armchair and stood pipe in hand beside her, looking down upon her. In his heart there was the passionate self-accusing sense that he could not feel pity, or affection, or remorse for the past when she was there; every look and word roused in him the old irritation, the old wish to master her, he had known so often in his youth. Yet he drew himself together, striving to do his best.

'Well, now, look here,' said Louie defiantly, 'I want some money.'

'So I supposed,' he said quietly, lighting his pipe.

Louie reddened.

'Well, and if I do want it,' she said, breathing quickly, 'I've a right to want it. You chose to waste all that money—all my money—on that marrying business, and you must take the consequence. I look upon it this way—you promised to put my money into your trade and give me a fair share of your profits. Then you chucked it away—you made me spend it all, and now, of course, I'm to have nothing to say to your profits. Oh dear, no! It's a trifle that I'm a pauper and you're rolling in money compared to me anyway. Oh! it doesn't matter nothing to nobody—not at all! All the same you couldn't have made the start you did—not those few months I was with you—without my money. Why can't you confess it, I want to know—and behave more handsome to me now—instead of leaving me in that state that I haven't a franc to bless myself with!'

She threw herself back in her chair, with one arm flung behind her head. David stared at her tongue-tied for a while by sheer amazement.

'I gave you everything I had,' he said, at last, with a slow distinctness, 'all your money, and all my own too. When I came back here, I had my new stock, it is true, but it was much of it unpaid for. My first struggle was to get my neck out of debt.'

He paused, shrinking with a kind of sick repulsion from the memory of that bygone year of shattered nerves and anguished effort. Deliberately he let thought and speech of it drop.

Louie was the last person in the world to whom he could talk of it.

'I built up my business again,' he resumed, 'by degrees. Mr. Doyle lent me money—it was on that capital I first began to thrive. From the very beginning, even in the very year when I handed over to you all our father's money—I sent you more. And every year since—you know as well as I do—'

But again he looked away and paused. Once more he felt himself on a wrong tack. What was the use of laying out, so to speak, all that he had done in the sight of these angry eyes? Besides, a certain high pride restrained him.

Louie looked a trifle disconcerted, and her flush deepened. Her audacious attempt to put him in the wrong and provide herself with a grievance could not be carried on. She took refuge in passion.

'Oh, I dare say you think you've done a precious lot!' she said, sitting straight up and locking her hands round her knee, while the whole frame of her stiffened and quivered. 'I suppose you think other people would think so too. *I* don't care! It don't matter to me. You're the only belonging I've got—who else was there for me to look to? Oh, it is all very fine! All I know is, I can't stand my life any more! If you can't do anything, I'll just pack up my traps and go. *Somebody* 'll have to make it easier for me, that's all! Last week—I was out of the house—he found out where I kept my money, he broke the lock open, and when I got home there was nothing. *Nothing*, I tell you!' Her voice rose to a shrillness that made David look to see that the door between them and Lucy was securely closed. 'And I'd promised a whole lot of things to the church for Easter, and Cécile and I haven't got a rag between us; and as for the rent, the landlord may whistle for it! Oh! the beast!' she said, between her teeth, while the fierce tears stood in her eyes.

Lucy—any woman of normal shrewdness, putting two and two together—would have allowed these complaints about half their claimed weight. Upon David—unconsciously inclined to measure all emotion by his own standard—they produced an immediate and deep impression.

'You poor thing!' he murmured, as he stood looking down upon her.

She tossed her head, as though resenting his compassion.

'Yes, I'm about tired of it! I thought I'd come over and tell you that. Now you know,—and if you hear things you don't like, don't blame me, that's all!'

Her great eyes blazed into his. He understood her. Her child—the priests—had, so far, restrained her. Now—what strange mixture of shameless impulse—curiosity, greed, reckless despair—had driven her here that she might threaten him thus!

'Ah, I dare say you think I've had a gay life of it over there with your money,' she went on, not allowing him to speak. '*My God!*'

She shrugged her shoulders, with a scornful laugh, while the tempest gathered within her.

'Don't I know perfectly that for years I have been one of the most beautiful women in Paris! Ask the men who have painted me for the Salon—ask that brute who might have made a fortune out of me if he hadn't been the sot he is! And what have I got by it? What do other women who are not a tenth part as good-looking as I am get by it? A comfortable life, anyway! *Eh bien! essayons!—nous aussi.*'

The look she flung at him choked the words on his lips.

'When I think of these ten years,' she cried, 'I just wonder at myself. There,—what you think about it I don't know, and I don't care. I might have had a good time, and I've had a *devil's* time. And, upon my word, I think I'll make a change!'

In her wild excitement she sprang up and began to pace the narrow room.

David watched her, fighting with himself, and with that inbred antipathy of temperament which seemed to paralyse both will and judgment. Was the secret of it that in their profound unlikeness they were yet so much alike?

Then he went up to her and made her sit down again.

'Let me have a word now,' he said quietly, though his hand as it gripped hers had a force of which he was unconscious. 'You say you wonder at yourself. Well, I can tell you this: other people have wondered too! When I left you in Paris ten years ago, I tell you frankly, I had no hopes. I said to myself—don't rage at me!—with that way of looking at things, and with such a husband, what chance is there? And for some years now, Louie, I confess to you, I have been simply humbled and amazed to see what—what'—his voice sank and shook—'*love—and the fear of God*—can do. It has been hard to be miserable and poor—I know that—but you have cared for Cécile, and you have feared to shut yourself out from good people who spoke to you in God's name. Don't do yourself injustice. Believe in yourself. Look back upon these years and be thankful. With all their miseries they have been a kind of victory! Will you throw them away *now?* But your child is growing up and will understand. And there are hands to help—mine, always—always.'

He held out his to her, smiling. He could not have analysed his own impulse—this strange impulse which had led him to bless instead of cursing. But its effect upon Louie was startling. She had looked for, perhaps in her fighting mood she had ardently desired, an outburst of condemnation, against which her mad pleasure in the sound of her own woes and hatreds might once more spend itself. And instead of blaming and reproaching he had—

She stared at him. Then with a sudden giving way, which was a matter partly of nerves and partly of surprise, she let her two arms fall upon the edge of the chair, and dropping her head upon them, burst out into wild sobbing.

His own eyes were wet. He soothed her hurriedly and incoherently, told her he would spare her all the money he could; that he and Lucy would do their best, but that she must not suppose they were very rich. He did not regard all his money as his own.

He went on to explain to her something of his business position. Her sobbing slackened and ceased. And presently, his mood changing instinctively with hers, he became more vague and cautious in statement; his tone veered back towards that which he was accustomed to use to her. For, once her burst of passion over, he felt immediately that she was once more criticising everything that he said and did in her own interest.

'Oh, I know you've become a regular Communist,' she said sullenly at last, drying her eyes in haste. 'Well, I tell you, I must have a hundred pounds. I can't do with a penny less than that.'

He tried to get out of her for what precise purposes she wanted it, and whether her husband had stolen from her the whole of the quarter's allowance he had just sent her. She answered evasively; he felt that she was telling him falsehoods; and once more his heart grew dry within him.

'Well,' he said at last with a certain decision, 'I will do it if I can, and I think I can do it. But, Louie, understand that I have got Lucy and the child to think for, that I am not alone.'

'I should think *she* had got more than she could expect!' cried Louie, putting her hair straight with trembling hands.

His cheek flushed at the sneer, but before he could reply she said abruptly:

'Have you ever told her about Paris?'

'No,' he said, with equal abruptness, his mouth taking a stern line, 'and unless I am forced to do so I never shall. That you understand, I know, for I spoke to you about it in Paris. My past died for me when I asked Lucy to be my wife. I do not ask you to remember this. I take it for granted.'

'I saw that woman the other day,' said Louie with a strange smile, as she sat staring into the fire.

He started, but he did not reply. He went to straighten some papers on his table. It seemed to him that he did not want her to say a word more, and yet he listened for it.

'I remember they used to call her pretty,' said Louie, a hateful scorn shining in her still reddened eyes. 'She is just a little frump now—nobody would ever look at her twice. They say her husband leads her a life. He poisoned himself at an operation and has gone half crippled. She has to keep them both. She doesn't give herself the airs she used to, anyway.'

David could bear it no longer.

'I think you had better go and take Cécile to bed,' he said peremptorily. 'I heard it strike nine a few minutes ago. I will go and talk business to Lucy.'

She went with a careless air. As he saw her shut the door

his heart felt once more dead and heavy. A few minutes before there had been the flutter of a divine presence between them. Now he felt nothing but the iron grip of character and life. And that little picture which her last words had left upon the mind—it carried with it a shock and dreariness he could only escape by hard work, that best medicine of the soul. He went out early next morning to his printing-office, spent himself passionately upon a day of difficulties, and came back refreshed.

For the rest, he talked to Lucy, and with great difficulty persuaded her in the matter of the hundred pounds. Lucy's indignation may be taken for granted, and the angry proofs she heaped on David that Louie was an extravagant story-telling hussy, who spent everything she could get on dress and personal luxury.

'Why, her dressing-table is like a perfumer's shop!' she cried in her wrath; 'what she does with all the messes I can't imagine—makes herself beautiful, I suppose! Why should we pay for it all? And I tell you she has got a necklace of real pearls. I know they are real, for she told Lizzie' (Lizzie was the boy's nurse) 'that she always took them about with her to keep them safe out of her husband's clutches—just imagine her talking to the girl like that! When will you be able to give *me* real pearls, and where do you suppose she got them?'

David preferred not to inquire. What could he do, he asked himself in despair—what even could he know, unless Louie chose that he should know it? But she, on the contrary, carefully avoided the least recurrence to the threats of her first talk with him.

Ultimately, however, he brought his wife round, and Louie was informed that she could have her hundred pounds, which should be paid her on the day of her departure, but that nothing more, beyond her allowance, could or should be given her during the current year.

She took the promise very coolly, but certainly made herself more agreeable after it was given. She dressed up Cécile and set her dancing in the evenings, weird dances of a Spanish type, alternating between languor and a sort of 'possession,' which had been taught the child by a moustached violinist from Madrid, who admired her mother and paid Louie a fantastic and stormy homage through her child. She also condescended to take an interest in Lucy's wardrobe. The mingled temper and avidity with which Lucy received her advances may be imagined. It made her mad to have it constantly implied that her gowns and bonnets would not be worn by a maid-of-all-work in Paris. At the same time, when Louie's fingers had been busy with them it was as plain to her as to anyone else that they became her twice as well as they had before. So she submitted to be pinned and pulled about and tried on, keeping as much as possible on her dignity all the time, and reddening with fresh wrath each time

that Louie made it plain to her that she thought her sister-in-law a provincial little fool, and was only troubling herself about her to pass the time.

Dora, of course, came up to see Louie, and Louie was much more communicative to her than to either Lucy or David. She told stories of her husband which made Dora's hair stand on end; but she boasted in great detail of her friendships with certain Legitimist ladies of the bluest blood, with one of whom she had just held a *quête* for some Catholic object on the stairs of the Salon. 'I was in blue and pink with a little silver,' she said, looking quickly behind her to see that Lucy was not listening. 'And Cécile was a fairy, with spangled wings—the sweetest thing you ever saw. We were both in the illustrated papers the week after, but as nobody took any notice of Madame de C—— she has behaved like a washerwoman to me ever since. As if I could help her complexion or her age!'

But above all did she boast herself against Dora in Church matters. She would go to St. Damian's on Sunday, triumphantly announcing that she should have to confess it as a sin when she got home, and afterwards, when Dora, as her custom was, came out to early dinner with the Grieves, Louie could not contain herself on the subject of the dresses, the processions, the decorations, the flowers, and ceremonial trappings in general, with which *she* might, if she liked, regale herself either at Ste. Eulalie or the Madeleine, in comparison with the wretched show offered by St. Damian's. Dora, after an early service and much Sunday-school, sat looking pale and weary under the scornful information poured out upon her. She was outraged by Louie's tone; yet she was stung by her contempt. Once her gentleness was roused to speech, and she endeavoured to give some of the reasons for rejecting the usurped authority of the 'Bishop of Rome,' in which she had been drilled at different times. But she floundered and came to grief. Her adversary laughed at her, and in the intervals of rating Cécile for having inked her dress, flaunted some shrill controversy which left them all staring. Louie vindicating the claims of the Holy See with much unction and an appropriate diction! It seemed to David, as he listened, that the irony of life could hardly be carried further.

On the following day, David, not without a certain consciousness, said to John Dalby, his faithful helper through many years, and of late his partner:

'My sister is up at our place, John, with her little girl. Lucy would be very glad if you would go in this evening to see them.'

John, who was already aware of the advent of Madame Montjoie, accepted the invitation and went. Louie received him with a manner half mocking—half patronising—and made no effort whatever to be agreeable to him. She was preoccupied; and the stout, shy man in his new suit only bored her. As for him, he sat and watched her; his small, amazed eyes took in her ways with Cécile, alternately boastful and tyrannical; her airs

towards Lucy; her complete indifference to her brother's life and interests. When he got up to go, he took leave of her with all the old timid *gaucherie.* But if, when he entered the room, there had been anything left in his mind of the old dream, he was a wholly free man when he recrossed the threshold. He walked home thinking much of a small solicitor's daughter, who worshipped at the Congregational chapel he himself attended. He had been at David Grieve's side all these years; he loved him probably more than he would now love any woman; he devoted himself with ardour to the printing and selling of the various heretical works and newspapers published by Grieve & Co.; and yet for some long time past he had been—and was likely to remain—a man of strong religious convictions, of a common Evangelical type.

The second week of Louie's stay was a much greater trial than the first to all concerned. She grew tired of dressing and patronising Lucy; her sharp eyes and tongue found out all her sister-in-law's weak points; the two children were a fruitful source of jarring and jealousy between the mothers; and by the end of the week their relation was so much strained, and David had so much difficulty in keeping the peace, that he could only pine for the Monday morning which was to see Louie's departure. Meanwhile nothing occurred to give him back his momentary hold upon her. She took great care not to be alone with him. It was as though she felt the presence of a new force in him, and would give it no chance of affecting her in mysterious and incalculable ways.

On the Saturday before her last Sunday, Reuben Grieve arrived in Manchester—with his wife. His nephew's letter and invitation had thrown the old man into a great flutter. Ultimately his curiosity as to David's home and child—David himself he had seen several times since the marriage—and the desire, which the more prosperous state of his own circumstances allowed him to feel, to see what Louie might be like after all these years—decided him to go. And when he told Hannah of his intended journey, he found, to his amazement, that she was minded to go too. 'If yo'll tell me when yo gan me a jaunt last, I'll be obliged to yo!' she said sourly, and he at once felt himself a selfish brute that he should have thought of taking the little pleasure without her.

When they were seated in the railway-carriage, he broke out in a sudden excitement:

'Wal, I never thowt, Hannah, to see yo do thissens naw moor!'

'Aye, yo wor allus yan to mak t' warst o' things,' she said to him, as she slowly settled herself in her corner.

Nevertheless, Reuben's feeling was amply justified. It had been a resurrection. The clever young doctor, brimful of new methods, who had brought her round, had arrived just in time to stop the process of physical deterioration before it had gone too far; and the recovery of power both on the paralysed side

and in general health had been marvellous. She walked with a stick, and was an old and blanched woman before her time. But her indomitable spirit was once more provided with its necessary means of expression. She was at least as rude as ever, and it was as clear as anything can be in the case of a woman who has never learnt to smile, that her visit to Manchester—the first for ten years—was an excitement and satisfaction to her.

David met them at the station; but Reuben persisted in going to an old-fashioned eating-house in the centre of the city, where he had been accustomed to stay on the occasion of his rare visits to Manchester, in spite of his nephew's repeated offers of hospitality.

'Noa, Davy, noa,' he said, 'yo're a gen'leman now, and yo conno' be moidered wi' oos. We'st coom and see yo—thank yo kindly,—bit we'st do for oursels i' th' sleepin' way.'

To which Hannah gave a grim and energetic assent.

When Louie had been told of their expected arrival she opened her black eyes to their very widest extent.

'Well, you'd better keep Aunt Hannah and me out of each other's way,' she remarked briefly. 'I shall let her have it, you'll see. I'm bound to.' A remark that David did his best to forget, seeing that the encounter was now past averting.

When on Sunday afternoon the door of the Grieves's sitting-room opened to admit Hannah and Reuben Grieve, Louie was lying half asleep in an armchair by the fire, Cécile and Sandy were playing with bricks in the middle of the floor, and Dora and Lucy were chatting on the sofa.

Lucy, who had seen Reuben before, but had never set eyes on Hannah, sprang up ill at ease and awkward, but genuinely anxious to behave nicely to her husband's relations.

'Won't you take a chair? I'll go and call David. He's in the next room. This is Miss Lomax. Louie!'

Startled by the somewhat sharp call, Louie sat up and rubbed her eyes.

Hannah, resting on her stick, was standing in the middle of the floor. At sight of the familiar tyrannous face, grown parchment-white in place of its old grey hue—of the tall gaunt figure robed in the Sunday garb of rusty black which Louie perfectly remembered, and surmounted by the old head-gear—the stiff frizzled curls held in place by two small combs on the temples, the black bandeau across the front of the head, and the towering bonnet—Louie suddenly flushed and rose.

'How do you do?' she said in a cool off-hand way, holding out her hand, which Hannah's black cotton glove barely touched. 'Well, Uncle Reuben, do you think I'm grown? I have had about time to, anyway, since you saw me. That's my little girl.'

With a patronising smile she pushed forward Cécile. The short-sighted tremulous Reuben, staring uncomfortably about him at the town splendours in which 'Davy' lived, had to have

the child's hand put into his by Dora before he could pull himself together enough to respond.

'I'm glad to see tha, my little dear,' he said, awkwardly dropping his hat and umbrella, as he stooped to salute her. 'I'm sure yo're varra kind, miss'—this was said apologetically to Dora, who had picked up his belongings and put them on a chair. 'Wal, Louie, she doan't feature her mither mich, as I can see.'

He looked hurriedly at his wife for confirmation. Hannah, who had seated herself on the highest and plainest chair she could find, stared the child up and down, and then slowly removed her eyes, saying nothing. Instantly her manner woke the old rage in Louie, who was observing her excitedly.

'Come here to me, Cécile. I'd be sorry, anyway, if you were like what your mother was at your age. You'd be a poor, ill-treated, half-starved little wretch if you were!'

Hannah started, but not unpleasantly. Her grim mouth curved with a sort of satisfaction. It was many years since she had enjoyed those opportunities for battle which Louie's tempers had once so freely afforded her.

'She's nobbut a midge,' she remarked audibly to Dora, who had just tried to propitiate her by a footstool. 'The chilt looks as thoo she'd been fed on spiders or frogs, or summat o' that soart.'

At this moment David came in, just in time to prevent another explosion from Louie. He was genuinely glad to see his guests; his feeling of kinship was much stronger now than it ever had been in his youth; and in these years of independent, and on the whole happy, living he had had time to forget even Hannah's enormities.

'Well, have you got a comfortable inn?' he asked Reuben presently, when some preliminaries were over.

'I thank yo kindly, Davy,' said Reuben cautiously, 'we're meeterly weel sarved; bit yo conno look for mich fro teawn folk.'

'What are yo allus so mealy-mouthed for?' said his wife indignantly. 'Why conno yo say reet out 'at it's a pleeace not fit for ony decent dog to put his head in, an' an ill-mannert daggle-tail of a woman to keep it, as I'd like to sweep out wi th' bits of a morning, an' leave her on th' muck-heap wheer she belongs?'

David laughed. To an ear long accustomed to the monotony of town civilities there was a not unwelcome savour of the moors even in these brutalities of Hannah's.

'Sandy, where are you?' he said, looking round. 'Have you had a look at him, Aunt Hannah?'

Sandy, who was sitting in the midst of his bricks sucking his thumb patiently till Cécile should be given back to him by her mother, and these invaders should be somehow dispersed, looked up and gave his father a sleepy and significant nod, as much as to say, 'Leave me alone, and turn these people out.'

But David lifted him up, and carried him off for exhibition.

Hannah looked at him, as he lay lazily back on his father's arm, his fair curls straying over David's coat, his cheek flushed by the heat. 'Aye, he's a gradely little chap,' she said, more graciously it seemed to David than he ever remembered to have heard Hannah Grieve speak before. His paternal vanity was instantly delighted.

'Sit up, Sandy, and tell your great-uncle and aunt about the fine games you've been having with your cousin.'

But Sandy was lost in quite other reflections. He looked out upon Hannah and Reuben with grave filmy eyes, as though from a vast distance, and said absently:

'Daddy!'

'Yes, Sandy, speak up.'

'Daddy, when everybody in the world was babies, who put 'em to bed?'

The child spoke as usual with a slow flute-like articulation, so that every word could be heard. Reuben and Hannah turned and looked at each other.

'Lord alive!' cried Hannah 'whativer put sich notions into th' chilt's yed?'

David, with a happy twinkle in his eye, held up a hand for silence.

'I don't know, Sandy; give it up.'

Sandy considered a second or two, then said, with the sigh of one who relinquishes speculation in favor of the conventional solution:

'I s'pose God did.'

His tone was dejected, as though he would gladly have come to another conclusion if he could.

'Reuben,' said Hannah with severity, 'hand me that sugar-stick.'

Reuben groped in his pockets for the barley-sugar, which, in spite of Hannah's scoffs, he had bought in Market Street the evening before, 'for t' childer.' He watched his wife in gaping astonishment as he saw her approaching Sandy, with blandishments which, rough and clumsy as they were, had nevertheless the effect of beguiling that young man on to the lap where barley-sugar was to be had. Hannah fed him triumphantly, making loud remarks on his beauty and cleverness.

Meanwhile Louie stood on the other side of the fire, holding Cécile close against her, with a tight defiant grip—her lip twitching contemptuously. David, always sensitively alive to her presence and her moods, insisted in the midst of Sandy's feast that Cécile should have her share. Sandy held out the barley-sugar, following it with wistful eyes. Louie beat down Cécile's grasping hand. 'You shan't spoil your tea—you'll be sick with that stuff!' she said imperiously. Hannah turned, and brought a slow venomous scrutiny to bear upon her niece—on the slim tall figure in the elegant Parisian dress, the daintily curled and frizzled head, the wild angry eyes. Then she with-

drew her glance, contented. Louie's evident jealousy appeased her. She had come to Manchester with one fixed determination —not to be 'talked foine to by that hizzy.'

At this juncture tea made its appearance, Lucy having some time ago given up the sit-down tea in the dining-room, which was the natural custom of her class, as not genteel. She seated herself nervously to pour it out. Hannah had at the very beginning put her down 'as a middlin' soart o' person,' and vouchsafed her very little notice.

'Auntie Dora! auntie Dora!' cried Sandy, escaping from Hannah's knee, 'I'm coming to sit by zoo.'

And as soon as he had got comfortably into her pocket, he pulled her head down and whispered to her, his thoughts running as before in the theological groove, 'Auntie Dora, God made me —and God made Cécile—*did* God make that one?'

And he nodded across at Hannah, huddling himself together meanwhile in a paroxysm of glee and mischief. He was excited by the flatteries he had been receiving, and Dora, thankful to see that Hannah had heard nothing, could only quiet him by copious supplies of bread and butter.

David wooed Cécile to sit on a stool beside him, and things went smoothly for a time, though Hannah made it clearly evident that this was not the kind of tea she had expected, and that she 'didn't howd wi' new-fangled ways o' takkin' your vittles.' Reuben did his best to cover and neutralise her remarks by gossip to David about the farm and the valley. 'Eh—it's been nobbut *raggy* weather up o' the moors this winter, Davy, an' a great lot o' sheep lost. Nobbut twothrey o' mine, I thank th' Lord.' But in the midst of a most unflattering account of the later morals and development of the Wigson family, Reuben stopped dead short, with a stare at the door.

'Wal, aa niver!—theer's Mr. Ancrum hissel,—I do uphowd yo!'

And the old man rose with effusion, his queer eyes and face beaming and blinking with a light of affectionate memory, for Ancrum stood in the doorway, smiling a mute inquiry at Lucy as to whether he might come in. David sprang up to bring him into the circle. Hannah held out an ungracious hand. Never, all these years, had she forgiven the ex-minister those representations he had once made on the subject of David's 'prenticing.

Then the new-comer sat down by Reuben cheerily, parrying the farmer's concern about his altered looks, and watching Louie, who had thrown him a careless word in answer to his greeting. Dora, who had come to know him well, and to feel much of the affectionate reverence for him that David did, in spite of some bewilderment as to his religious position, went round presently to talk to him, and Sandy as it happened was left on his stool for a minute or two forgotten. He asked his mother plaintively for cake, and she did not hear him. Meanwhile Cécile had cake, and he followed her eating of it with resentful eyes.

'Come here, Cécile,' said David, 'and hold the cake while I cut it; there's a useful child.'

He handed a piece to Reuben, and then put the next into Cécile's hand.

'Ready for some more, little woman?'

Cécile in a furtive squirrel-like way seized the piece and was retiring with it, when Sandy, beside himself, jumped from his stool, rushed at his cousin and beat her wildly with his small fists.

'Yo're a geedy thing—a geedy 'gustin' thing!' he cried, sobbing partly because he wanted the cake, still more because, after his exaltation on Hannah's knee, he had been so unaccountably neglected. To see Cécile battening on a second piece while he was denied a first was more than could be borne.

'You little viper, you!' exclaimed Louie, and springing up, she swept across to Sandy, and boxed his ears smartly, just as she was accustomed to box Cécile's, whenever the fancy took her.

The child raised a piercing cry, and David caught him up.

'Give him to me, David, give him to me,' cried Lucy, who had almost upset the tea-table in her rush to her child. 'I'll see whether that sister of yours shall beat and abuse my boy in my own house! Oh, she may beat her own child as much as she pleases, she does it all day long! If she were a poor person she would be had up.'

Her face glowed with passion. The exasperation of many days spoke in her outburst. David, himself trembling with anger, in vain tried to quiet her and Sandy.

'Ay, I reckon she maks it hot wark for them 'at ha to live wi her,' said Hannah audibly, looking round on the scene with a certain enjoyment which contrasted with the panic and distress of the rest.

Louie, who was holding Cécile—also in tears—in her arms, swept her fierce, contemptuous gaze from Lucy to her ancient enemy.

'You must be putting in *your* word, must you?—you old toad, you—you that robbed us of our money till your own husband was ashamed of you!'

And, totally regardless of the presence of Dora and Ancrum, and of the efforts made to silence her by Dora or by the flushed and unhappy Reuben, she descended on her foe. She flung charge after charge in Hannah's face, showing the minutest and most vindictive memory for all the sordid miseries of her childhood; and then when her passion had spent itself on her aunt, she returned to Lucy, exulting in the sobs and the excitement she had produced. In vain did David try either to silence her or to take Lucy away. Nothing but violence could have stopped the sister's tongue; his wife, under a sort of fascination of terror and rage, would not move. Flinging all thoughts of her dependence on David—of the money she had come to ask—of her leave-taking on the morrow—to the winds, Louie revenged

herself amply for her week's unnatural self-control, and gave full rein to a mad propensity which had been gradually roused and spurred to ungovernable force by the trivial incidents of the afternoon. She made mock of Lucy's personal vanity; she sneered at her attempts to ape her betters, shrilly declaring that no one would ever take her for anything else than what she was, the daughter of a vulgar cheese-paring old hypocrite; and, finally, she attacked Sandy as a nasty, greedy, abominable little monkey, not fit to associate with her child, and badly in want of the stick.

Then slowly she retreated to the door out of breath, the wild lightnings of her eyes flashing on them still. David was holding the hysterical Lucy, while Dora was trying to quiet Sandy. Otherwise a profound silence had fallen on them all, a silence which seemed but to kindle Louie's fury the more.

'Ah, you think you've got him in your power, him and his money, you little white-livered cat!' she cried, standing in the doorway, and fixing Lucy with a look beneath which her sister-in-law quailed, and hid her face on David's arm. 'You think you'll stop him giving it to them that have a right to look to him? Perhaps you'd better look out; perhaps there are people who know more about him than you. Do you think he would ever have looked at you, you little powsement, if he hadn't been taken on the rebound?'

She gave a mad laugh as she flung out the old Derbyshire word of abuse, and stood defying them, David and all. David strode forward and shut the door upon her. Then he went tenderly up to his wife, and took her and Sandy into the library.

The sound of Cécile's wails could be heard in the distance. The frightened Reuben turned and looked at his wife. She had grown paler even than before, but her eyes were all alive.

'A racklesome, natterin' creetur as ivir I seed,' she said calmly; 'I allus telt tha, Reuben Grieve, what hoo'd coom to. It's bred in her—that's yan thing to be hodden i' mind. But I'll shift her in double quick-sticks if she ever cooms meddlin' i' *my* house, Reuben Grieve—soa yo know.'

'She oughtn't to stay here,' said Ancrum in a quick undertone to Dora; 'she might do that mother and child a mischief.'

Dora sat absorbed in her pity for David, in her passionate sympathy for this home that was as her own,

'She is going to-morrow, thank God!' she said with a long breath; 'oh, what an awful woman!'

Ancrum looked at her with a little sad smile.

'Whom are you sorry for?' he asked. 'Those two in there?' and he nodded towards the library. 'Think again, Miss Dora. There is one face that will haunt me whenever I think of this—he face of that French child.'

All the afternoon visitors dispersed. The hours passed. Lucy, worn out, had gone to bed with a crying which seemed to have

in it some new and heavy element she would not speak of, even to David. The evening meal came, and there was no sign or sound from that room upstairs where Louie had locked herself in.

David stood by the fire in the dining-room, his lips sternly set. He had despatched a servant to Louie's door with an offer to send up food for her and Cécile. But the girl had got no answer. Was he bound to go—bound to bring about the possible renewal of a degrading scene?

At this moment Lizzie, the little nurse, tapped at the door.

'If you please, sir—'

'Yes. Anything wrong with Master Sandy?'

David went to the door in a tremor. 'He won't go to sleep, sir. He wants you, and I'm afraid he'll disturb mistress again.'

David ran upstairs.

'Sandy, what do you want?'

Sandy was crying violently, far down under the bedclothes. When David drew him out, he was found to be grasping a piece of crumbling cake, sticky with tears.

'It's Cécile's cake,' he sobbed into his father's ear. 'I want to give it her.'

And in fact, after his onslaught upon her, Cécile had dropped the offending cake, which he had instantly picked up the moment before Louie struck him. He had held it tight gripped ever since, and repentance was busy in his small heart.

David thought a moment.

'Come with me, Sandy,' he said at last, and, wrapping up the child in an old shawl that hung near, he carried him off to Louie's door. 'Louie!' he called, after his knock, in a low voice, for he was uncomfortably aware that his household was on the watch for developments.

For a while there was no answer. Sandy, absorbed in the interest of the situation, clung close to his father and stopped crying.

At last Louie suddenly flung the door wide open.

'What do you want?' she said defiantly, with the gesture and bearing of a tragic actress. She was, however, deadly white, and David, looking past her, saw that Cécile was lying wide awake in her little bed.

'Sandy wants to give Cécile her cake,' he said quietly, 'and to tell her that he is sorry for striking her.'

He carried his boy up to Cécile. A smile flashed over the child's worn face. She held out her little arms. David, infinitely touched, laid down Sandy, and the children crooned together on the same pillow, he trying to stuff the cake into Cécile's mouth, she gently refusing.

'She's ill,' said Louie abruptly, 'she's feverish—I want a doctor.'

'We can get one directly,' he said. 'Will you come down and have some food? Lucy has gone to bed. If Lizzie comes

and sits by the children, perhaps they will go to sleep. I can carry Sandy back later.'

Louie paused irresolutely. Then she went up to the bed, knelt down by it, and took Cécile in her arms.

'You can take him away,' she said, pointing to Sandy. 'I will put her to sleep. Don't you send me anything to eat. I want a doctor. And if you won't order a fly for me at twenty minutes to nine to-morrow, I will go out myself, that's all.'

'Louie!' he cried, holding out his hand to her in despair, 'why will you treat us in this way—what have we done to you?'

'Never you mind,' she said sullenly, gathering the child to her and confronting him with steady eyes. There was a certain magnificence in their wide unconscious despair—in this one fierce passion.

She and Lucy did not meet again. In the morning David paid her her hundred pounds, and took her and Cécile to the station, a doctor having seen the child the night before, and prescribed medicine, which had given her a quiet night. Louie barely thanked him for the money. She was almost silent and still very pale.

Just before they parted, the thought of the tyranny of such a nature, of the life to which she was going back, wrung the brother's heart. The outrage of the day before dropped from his mind as of no account, effaced by sterner realities.

'Write to me, Louie!' he said to her just as the train was moving off; 'I could always come if there was trouble—or Dora.'

She did not answer, and her hand dropped from his. But he remembered afterwards that her eyes were fixed upon him, as long as the train was in sight, and the picture of her dark possessed look will be with him to the end.

CHAPTER VII

It was a warm April Sunday. Lucy and Dora were pacing up and down in the garden, and Lucy was talking in a quick, low voice.

'Oh! there was something, Dora. You know as well as I do there was something. That awful woman didn't say that for nothing. I suppose he'd tell me if I asked him.'

'Then why don't you ask him?' said Dora, with a little frown.

Lucy gathered a sprig of budding lilac, and restlessly stripped off its young green.

'It isn't very pleasant,' she said at last, slowly. 'I dare say it's silly to expect your husband never to have looked at anybody else—'

She paused again, unable to explain herself. Dora glanced at her, and was somewhat struck by her thin and worn appearance. She had often, moreover, seemed to her cousin to be fretting during these last weeks. Not that there was much difference in her ways with David and Sandy. But her small vanities, prejudices,

and passions were certainly less apparent of late; she ordered her two servants about less; she was less interested in her clothes, less eager for social amusement. It was as though something clouding and dulling had passed over a personality which was naturally restless and vivacious.

Yet it was only to-day, in the course of some conversation about Louie, of whom nothing had been heard since her departure, that Lucy had for the first time broken silence on the subject of those insolent words of her sister-in-law, which Ancrum and Dora had listened to with painful shock, while to Reuben and Hannah, pre-occupied with their own long-matured ideas of Louie, they had been the mere froth of a venomous tongue.

'Why didn't you ask him about it at first—just after?' Dora resumed.

'I didn't want to,' said Lucy, after a minute, and then would say no more. But she walked along, thinking, unhappily, of the moment when David had taken her into the library to be out of the sound of Louie's rage; of her angry desire to ask him questions, checked by a childish fear she could not analyse, as to what the answers might be; of his troubled, stormy face; and of the tender ways by which he tried to calm and comfort her. It had seemed to her that once or twice he had been on the point of saying something grave and unusual, but in the end he had refrained. Louie had gone away; their everyday life had begun again; he had been very full, in the intervals of his hard daily business, of the rebuilding of the James Street court, and of the apprentices' school; and, led by a variety of impulses—by a sense of jeopardised possession and a conscience speaking with new emphasis and authority—she had taken care that he should talk to her about both; she had haunted him in the library, and her presence there, once the signal of antagonism and dispute, had ceased to have any such meaning for him. Her sympathy was not very intelligent, and there was at times a childish note of sulkiness and reluctance in it; she was extremely ready to say, 'I told you so,' if anything went wrong; but, nevertheless, there was a tacit renunciation at the root of her new manner to him which he perfectly understood, and rewarded in his own ardent, affectionate way.

As she sauntered along in this pale gleam of sun, now drinking in the soft April wind, now stooping to look at the few clumps of crocuses and daffodils which were pushing through the blackened earth, Lucy had once more a vague sense that her life this spring—this past year—had been hard. It was like the feeling of one who first realises the intensity of some long effort or struggle in looking back upon it. Her little life had been breathed into by a divine breath, and growth, expansion, had brought a pain and discontent she had never known before.

Dora meanwhile had her own thoughts. She was lost in memories of that first talk of hers with David Grieve after his return from Paris, with the marks of his fierce, mysterious grief

fresh upon him; then, pursuing her recollection of him through the years, she came to a point of feeling where she said, with sudden energy, throwing her arm round Lucy, and taking up the thread of their conversation :—

'I wouldn't let what Louie said worry you a bit, Lucy. Of course, she wanted to make mischief; but you know, and I know, what sort of a man David has been since you and he were married. That'll be enough for you, I should think.'

Lucy flushed. She had once possessed very little reticence, and had been quite ready to talk her husband over, any day and all day, with Dora. But now, though she would begin in the old way, there soon came a point when something tied her tongue.

This time she attacked the lilac-bushes again with a restless hand.

'Why, I thought you were shocked at his opinions,' she said, proudly.

Dora sighed. Her conscience had not waited for Lucy's remark to make her aware of the constant perplexity between authority and natural feeling into which David's ideals were perpetually throwing her.

'They make one very sad,' she said, looking away. 'But we must believe that God, who sees everything, judges as we cannot do.'

Lucy fired up at once. It annoyed her to have Dora making spiritual allowance for David in this way.

'I don't believe God wants anything but that people should be good,' she said. 'I am sure there are lots of things like that in the New Testament.'

Dora shook her head slowly. '"He that hath not the Son, hath not life,"' she said under her breath, a sudden passion leaping to her eye.

Lucy looked at her indignantly. 'I don't agree with you, Dora—there! And it all depends on what things mean.'

'The meaning is quite plain,' said Dora, with rigid persistence. 'O Lucy, don't be led away. I missed you at early service this morning.'

The look she threw her cousin melted into a pathetic and heavenly reproach.

'Well, I know,' said Lucy, ungraciously, 'I was tired. I don't know what's wrong with me these last weeks; I can't get up in the morning.'

Dora only looked grieved. Lucy understood that her plea seemed to her cousin too trivial and sinful to be noticed.

'Oh! I dare say I'd go,' she said in her own mind, defiantly, 'if *he* went.'

Aloud, she said :—

'Dora, just look at this cheek of mine; I can't think what the swelling is.'

And she turned her right cheek to Dora, pointing to a lump, not discoloured, but rather large, above the cheek-bone. Dora stopped, and looked at it carefully.

'Yes, I had noticed it,' she said. 'It is odd. Can't you account for it in any way?'

'No. It's been coming some little while. David says I must ask Dr. Mildmay about it. I don't think I shall. It'll go away. Oh! there they are.'

As she spoke, David and Sandy, who had been out for a Sunday walk together, appeared on the steps of the garden-door. David waved his hat to his wife, an example immediately followed by Sandy, who twisted his Scotch cap madly, and then set off running to her.

Lucy looked at them both with a sudden softening and brightening which gave her charm. David came up to her, ran his arm through hers, and began to give her a laughing account of Sandy's behaviour. The April wind had flushed him, tumbled his black hair, and called up spring lights in the eyes, which had been somewhat dimmed by overmuch sedentary work and a too small allowance of sleep. His plenitude of virile energy, the glow of health and power which hung round him this afternoon, did but make Lucy seem more languid and faded as she hung upon him, smiling at his stories of their walk and of Sandy's antics.

He broke off in the middle, and looked at her anxiously.

'She isn't the thing, is she, Dora? I believe she wants a change.'

'Oh! thank you!' cried Lucy, ironically—'with all Sandy's spring things and my own to look to, and some new shirts to get for you, and the spring cleaning to see to. Much obliged to you.'

'All those things, madam,' said David, patting her hand, 'wouldn't matter twopence, if it should please your lord and master to order you off. And if this fine weather goes on, you'll have to take advantage of it. By the way, I met Mildmay, and asked him to come in and see you.'

Lucy reddened.

'Why, there's nothing,' she said, pettishly. 'This 'll go away directly.' Instinctively she put up her hand to her cheek.

'Oh! Mildmay won't worry you,' said David; 'he'll tell you what's wrong at once. You know you like him.'

'Well, I must go,' said Dora.

They understood that she had a mill-girls' Bible class at half-past five, and an evening service an hour later, so they did not press her to stay. Lucy kissed her, and Sandy escorted her half-way to the garden-door, giving her a breathless and magniloquent account of the 'hy'nas and kangawoos' she might expect to find congregated in the Merton Road outside. Dora, who was somewhat distressed by his powers of imaginative fiction, would not 'play up' as his father did, and he left her half-way to run back to David, who was always ready to turn road and back garden into 'Africa country' at a moment's notice, and people it to order with savages, elephants, boomerangs, kangaroos, and all other possible or impossible things that Sandy might chance to want.

Dora, looking back from the garden, saw them all three in a group together—Sandy tugging at his mother's skirts, and shouting at the top of his voice ; David's curly black head bent over his wife, who was gathering her brown shawl round her throat, as though the light wind chilled her. But there was no chill in her look. That, for the moment, as she swayed between husband and child, had in it the qualities of the April sun—a brightness and promise all the more radiant by comparison with the winter or the cloud from which it had emerged.

Dora went home as quickly as tramcar and fast walking could take her. She still lived in the same Ancoats rooms with her shirt-making friend, who had kept company, poor thing ! for four years with a young man, and had then given him up with anguish because he was not 'the sort of man she'd been taking him for,' though no one but Dora had ever known what qualities or practices, intolerable to a pure mind, the sad phrase covered. Dora might long ago have moved to more comfortable rooms and a better quarter of the town had she been so minded, for her wages as an admirable forewoman and an exceptionally skilled hand were high ; but she passionately preferred to be near St. Damian's and amongst her 'girls.' Also, there was the thought that by staying in the place whither she had originally moved she would be more easily discoverable if ever,—ay, if *ever*—Daddy should come back to her. She was certain that he was still alive ; and great as the probabilities on the other side became with every passing year, few people had the heart to insist upon them in the face of her sensitive faith, whereof the bravery was so close akin to tears.

Only once in all these years had there been a trace of Daddy. Through a silk-merchant acquaintance of his, having relations with Lyons and other foreign centres, David had once come across a rumour which had seemed to promise a clue. He had himself gone across to Lyons at once, and had done all he could. But the clue broke in his hand, and the tanned, long-faced lunatic from Manchester, whereof report had spoken, could be only doubtfully identified with a man who bore no likeness at all to Daddy.

Dora's expectation and hope had been stirred to their depths, and she bore her disappointment hardly. But she did not therefore cease to hope. Instinctively on this Sunday night, when she reached home, she put Daddy's chair, which had been pushed aside, in its right place by the fire, and she tenderly propped up a stuffed bird, originally shot by Daddy in the Vosges, and now vilely overtaken by Manchester moths. Then she set round chairs and books for her girls.

Soon they came trooping up the stairs, in their neat Sunday dresses, so sharply distinguished from the mill-gear of the week, and she spent with them a moving and mystical hour. She was expounding to them a little handbook of 'The Blessed Sacra-

ment,' and her explanations wound up with a close appeal to each one of them to make more use of the means of grace, to surrender themselves more fully to the awful and unspeakable mystery by which the Lord gave them His very flesh to eat, His very blood to drink, so fashioning within them, Communion after Communion, the immortal and incorruptible body which should be theirs in the Resurrection.

She spoke in a low, vibrating voice, somewhat monotonous in tone; her eyes shone with strange light under her round, prominent brow; all that she said of the joys of frequent Communion, of the mortal perils of unworthy participation, of treating the heavenly food lightly—coming to it, that is, unfasting and unprepared—of the need especially of Lenten self-denial, of giving up 'what each one of you likes best, so far as you can,' in preparation for the great Easter Eucharist—came evidently from the depths of her own intense conviction. Her girls listened to her with answering excitement and awe; one of them she had saved from drink, all of them had been her Sunday-school children for years, and many of them possessed, under the Lancashire exterior, the deep-lying poetry and emotion of the North.

When she dismissed them she hurried off to church, to sit once more dissolved in feeling, aspiration, penitence; to feel the thrill of the organ, the pathos of the bare altar, and the Lenten hymns.

After the service she had two or three things to settle with one of the curates and with some of her co-helpers in the good works of the congregation, so that when she reached home she was late and tired out. Her fellow-lodger was spending the Sunday with friends; there was no one to talk to her at her supper; and after supper she fell, sitting by the fire, into a mood of some flatness and reaction. She tried to read a religious book, but the religious nerve could respond no more, and other interests, save those of her daily occupations, she had none.

In Daddy's neighbourhood, what with his travels, his whims, and his quotations, there had been always something to stir the daughter's mind, even if it were only to reprobation. But since he had left her the circle of her thoughts had steadily and irrevocably narrowed. All secular knowledge, especially the reading of other than religious books, had become gradually and painfully identified, for her, with those sinister influences which made David Grieve an 'unbeliever,' and so many of the best Manchester workmen 'atheists.'

So now, in her physical and moral slackness, she sat and thought with some bitterness of a 'young woman' who had recently entered the shop which employed her, and, by dint of a clever tongue, was gaining the ear of the authorities, to the disturbance of some of Dora's cherished methods of distributing and organising the work. They might have trusted her more after all these years; but nobody appreciated her; she counted for nothing.

Then her mind wandered on to the familiar grievances of Sandy's religious teaching and Lucy's gradual defection from

St. Damian's. She must make more efforts with Lucy, even if it angered David. She looked back on what she had done to bring about the marriage, and lashed herself into a morbid sense of responsibility.

But her missionary projects were no more cheering to her than her thoughts about the shop and her work, and she felt an intense sense of relief when she heard the step of her room-mate, Mary Styles, upon the stairs. She made Mary go into every little incident of her day; she was insatiable for gossip—a very rare mood for her—and could not be chattered to enough.

And all through she leant her head against her father's chair, recalling Lucy on her husband's arm, and the child at her skirts, with the pathetic inarticulate longing which makes the tragedy of the single life. She could have loved so well, and no one had ever wished to make her his wife; the wound of it bled sometimes in her inmost heart.

Meanwhile, on this same April Sunday, Lucy, after Sandy was safe in bed, brought down some needlework to do beside David while he read. It was not very long since she had induced herself to make so great a breach in the Sunday habits of her youth. As soon as David's ideals began to tease her out of thought and sympathy, his freedoms also began to affect her. She was no longer so much chilled by his strictness, or so much shocked by his laxity.

David had spoken of a busy evening. In reality, a lazy fit overtook him. He sat smoking, and turning over the pages of Eckermann's 'Conversations with Goethe.'

'What are you reading?' said Lucy at last, struck by his face of enjoyment. 'Why do you like it so much?'

'Because there is no one else in the world who hits the right nail on the head so often as Goethe,' he said, throwing himself back with a stretch of pleasure. 'So wide a brain—so acute and sane a temper!'

Lucy looked a little lost, as she generally did when David made literary remarks to her. But she did not drop the subject.

'You said something to Professor Madgwick the other day about a line of Goethe you used to like so when you were a boy. What did it mean?'

She flushed, as though she were venturing on something which would make her ridiculous.

'A line of Goethe?' repeated David, pondering. 'Oh! I know. Yes, it was a line from Goethe's novel of "Werther." When I was young and foolish—when you and I were first acquainted, in fact, and you used to scold me for going to the Hall of Science!—I often said this line to myself over and over. I didn't know much German, but the swing of it carried me away.'

And, with a deep voice and rhythmic accent, he repeated: '*Handwerker trugen ihn; kein Geistlicher hat ihn begleitet.*'

'What does it mean?' said Lucy.

'Well, it comes at the end of the story. The hero commits suicide for love, and Goethe says that at his burial, on the night after his death, "labouring men bore him; no priest went with him."'

He bent forward, clasping his hands tightly, with the half smiling, half dreamy look of one who recalls a bygone thrill of feeling, partly in sympathy, partly in irony.

'Then he wasn't a Christian?' said Lucy, wondering. 'Do you still hate priests so much, David?'

'It doesn't look like it, does it, madam,' he said, laughing, 'when you think of all my clergymen friends?'

And, in fact, as Lucy's mind pondered his answer, she easily remembered the readiness with which any of the clergy at St. Damian's would ask his help in sending away a sick child, or giving a man a fresh start in life, or setting the necessary authorities to work in the case of some moral or sanitary scandal. She thought also of various Dissenting ministers who called on him and corresponded with him; of his reverent affection for Canon Aylwin, for Ancrum.

'Well, anyway, you care about the labouring men,' she went on persistently. 'I suppose you're what father used to call a "canting Socialist"?'

'No,' said David, quietly—'no, I'm not a Socialist, except'—and he smiled—'in the sense in which some one said the other day, "we are all Socialists now."'

'Well, what does it mean?' said Lucy, threading another needle, and feeling a certain excitement in this prolonged mental effort.

David tried to explain to her the common Socialist ideal in simple terms—the hope of a millennium, when all the instruments of production shall be owned by the State, and when the surplus profit produced by labour, over and above the maintenance of the worker and the general cost of production, will go, not to the capitalist, the individual rich man, but to the whole community of workers; when everybody will be made to work, and as little advantage as possible will be allowed to one worker above another.

'I think it's absurd!' said Lucy, up in arms at once for all the superiorities she loved. 'What nonsense! Why, they can't ever do it!'

'Well, it's about that!' said David, smiling at her. 'Still, no doubt it *could* be done, if it ought to be done. But Socialism, as a system, seems to *me*, at any rate, to strike down and weaken the most precious thing in the world, that on which the whole of civilised life and progress rests—the spring of will and conscience in the individual. Socialism as a spirit, as an influence, is as old as organised thought—and from the beginning it has forced us to think of the many when otherwise we should be sunk in thinking of the one. But, as a modern dogmatism, it is like other dogmatisms. The new truth of the future will emerge from it as a bud from its sheath, taking here and leaving there.'

He sat looking into the fire, forgetting his wife a little.

'Well, any way, I'm sure you and I won't have anything to do with it,' said Lucy positively. 'I don't a bit believe Lady Driffield will have to work in the mills, though Mrs. Shepton did say it would do her good. I shouldn't mind something, perhaps, which would make her and Colonel Danby less uppish.'

She drew her needle in and out with vindictive energy.

'Well, I don't see much prospect of uppish people dying out of the world,' said David, throwing himself back in his chair; 'until—'

He paused.

'Until what?' inquired Lucy.

'Well, of course,' he said after a minute, in a low voice, 'we must always hold that the world is tending to be better, that the Divine Life in it will somehow realise itself, that pride will become gentleness, and selfishness love. But the better life cannot be imposed from without—it must grow from within.'

Lucy pondered a moment.

'Then is it—is it because you think working-men *better* than other people that you are so much more interested in them? Because you are, you know.'

'Oh dear no!' he said, smiling at her from under the hand which shaded his eyes; 'they have their own crying faults and follies. But—so many of them lack the first elementary conditions which make the better life possible—that is what tugs at one's heart and fills one's mind! How can *we*—we who have gained for ourselves health and comfort and knowledge—how can we stand by patiently and see our brother diseased and miserable and ignorant?—how can we bear our luxuries, so long as a child is growing up in savagery whom we might have taught,—or a man is poisoning himself with drink whom we might have saved,—or a woman is dropping from sorrow and overwork whom we might have cherished and helped? We are not our own—we are parts of the whole. Generations of workers have toiled for us in the past. And are we, in return, to carry our wretched bone off to our own miserable corner!—sharing and giving nothing? Woe to us if we do! Upon such comes indeed the "second death,"—the separation final and irretrievable, as far, at any rate, as this world is concerned, between us and the life of God!'

Lucy had dropped her work. She sat staring at him—at the shining eyes, at the hand against the brow which shook a little, at the paleness which went so readily in him with any expression of deep emotion. Never had he so spoken to her before; never, all these years. In general no one shrank more than he from 'high phrases;' no one was more anxious than he to give all philanthropic talk a shrewd business-like aspect, which might prevent questions as to what lay beneath.

Her heart fluttered a little.

'David!' she broke out, 'what is it you believe? You know Dora thinks you believe nothing.'

'Does she?' he said, with evident shrinking. 'No, I don't think she does.'

Lucy instinctively moved her chair closer to him, and laid her head against his knee.

'Yes, she does. But I don't mind about that. I just wish you'd tell me why you believe in God, when you won't go to church, and when you think Jesus was just—just a man.'

She drew her breath quickly. She was making a first voyage of discovery in her husband's deepest mind, and she was astonished at her own venturesomeness.

He put out a hand and touched her hair.

'I can't read Nature and life any other way,' he said at last, after a silence. 'There seems to me something in myself, and in other human beings, which is beyond Nature—which, instead of being made by Nature, is the condition of our knowing there is a Nature at all. This something—reason, consciousness, soul, call it what you will—unites us to the world; for everywhere in the world reason is at home, and gradually finds itself; it makes us aware of a great order in which we move; it breaks down the barriers of sense between us and the absolute consciousness, the eternal life—"not ourselves," yet in us and akin to us!—whence, if there is any validity in human logic, that order must spring. And so, in its most perfect work, it carries us to God—it bids us claim our sonship—it gives us hope of immortality!'

His voice had the vibrating intensity of prayer. Lucy hardly understood what he said at all, but the tears came into her eyes as she sat hiding them against his knee.

'But what makes you think God is good—that He cares anything about us?' she said softly.

'Well—I look back on human life, and I ask what reason—which is the Divine Life communicated to us, striving to fulfil itself in us—has done, what light it throws upon its "great Original." And then I see that it has gradually expressed itself in law, in knowledge, in love; that it has gradually learnt, under the pressure of something which is itself and not itself, that to be gained life must be lost; that beauty, truth, love, are the *realities* which abide. Goodness has slowly proved itself in the world,—is every day proving itself,—like a light broadening in darkness!—to be that to which reason tends, in which it realises itself. And, if so, goodness here, imperfect and struggling as we see it always, must be the mere shadow and hint of that goodness which is in God!—and the utmost we can conceive of human tenderness, holiness, truth, though it tell us all we know, can yet suggest to us only the minutest fraction of what must be the Divine tenderness,—holiness,—truth.'

There was a silence.

'But this,' he added after a bit, 'is not to be *proved* by argument, though argument is necessary and inevitable, the mind being what it is. It can only be proved by living,—by taking it into our hearts,—by every little victory we gain over the evil self.'

The fire burnt quietly beside them. Everything was still in the house. Nothing stirred but their own hearts.

At last Lucy looked up quickly.

'I am glad,' she said with a kind of sob—'glad you think God loves us, and, if Sandy and I were to die, you would find us again.'

Instead of answering, he bent forward quickly and kissed her. She gave a little shrinking movement.

'Oh! that poor cheek!' he said remorsefully; 'did I touch it? I hope Dr. Mildmay won't forget to-morrow.'

'Oh! never mind about it,' she said, half impatiently. 'David!'

Her little thin face twitched and trembled. He was puzzled by her sudden change of expression, her agitation.

'David!—you know—you know what Louie said. I want you to tell me whether she—she meant anything.'

He gave a little start, then he understood perfectly.

'My dear wife,' he said, laying his hand on hers, which were crossed on his knee.

She waited breathlessly.

'You shall know all there is to know,' he said at last, with an effort. 'I thought perhaps you would have questioned me directly after that scene, and I would have told you; but as you did not, I could not bring myself to begin. What Louie said had to do with things that happened a year before I asked you to be my wife. When I spoke to you, they were dead and gone. The girl herself—was married. It was her story as well as my own, and it seemed to concern no one else in the world—not even you, dear. So I thought then, any way. Since, I have often wondered whether I was right.'

'Was it when you were in Paris?' she asked sharply.

He gave a sign of assent.

'I thought so!' she cried, drawing her breath. 'I always said there was more than being ill. I said so to Dora. Well, tell me—tell me at once! What was she like? Was she young, and good-looking?'

He could not help smiling at her—there was something so childish in her jealous curiosity.

'Let me tell you in order,' he said, 'and then we will both put it out of sight—at least, till I see Louie again.'

His heavy sigh puzzled her. But her strained and eager eyes summoned him to begin.

He told her everything, with singular simplicity and frankness. To Lucy it was indeed a critical and searching moment! No wife, whatever stuff she may be made of, can listen to such a story for the first time, from the husband she loves and respects, without passing thereafter into a new state of consciousness towards him. Sometimes she could hardly realise at all that it applied to David, this tale of passion he was putting, with averted face, into these short and sharp sentences. That conception of

him which the daily life of eight years, with its growing self-surrender, its expanding spiritual force, had graven on her mind, clashed so oddly with all that he was saying! A certain desolate feeling, too large and deep in all its issues to be harboured long in her slight nature, came over her now and then. She had been so near to him all these years, and had yet known nothing. It was the separateness of the individual lot—that awful and mysterious chasm which divides even lover from lover—which touched her here and there like a cold hand, from which she shrank.

She grew a little cold and pale when he spoke of his weeks of despair, of the death from which Ancrum had rescued him. But any ordinary prudish word of blame, even for his silence towards her, never occurred to her. Once she asked him a wistful question:—

'You and she thought that marrying didn't matter at all when people loved each other—that nobody had a right to interfere? Do you think that now, David?'

'No,' he said, with deep emphasis. '*No.*—I have come to think the most disappointing and hopeless marriage, nobly borne, to be better worth having than what people call an "ideal passion,"—if the ideal passion must be enjoyed at the expense of one of those fundamental rules which poor human nature has worked out, with such infinite difficulty and pain, for the protection and help of its own weakness. I did not know it,—but, so far as in me lay, I was betraying and injuring that society which has given me all I have.'

She sat silent. '*The most disappointing marriage.*' An echo from that overheard talk at Benet's Park floated through her mind. She winced, and shrank, even as she realised his perfect innocence of any such reference.

Then, with eagerness, she threw herself into innumerable questions about Elise—her looks, her motives, the details of what she said and did. Beneath the satisfaction of her curiosity, of course, there was all the time a pang—a pang not to be silenced. In her flights of idle fancy she had often suspected something not unlike the truth, basing her conjecture on the mystery which had always hung round that Paris visit, partly on the world's general experience of what happened to handsome young men. For, in her heart of hearts, had there not lurked all the time a wonder which was partly self-judgment? Had David, with such a temperament, never been more deeply moved than she knew herself to have moved him? More than once a secret inarticulate suspicion of this kind had crossed her. The poorest and shallowest soul may have these flashes of sad insight, under the kindling of its affections.

But now she *knew*, and the difference was vast. After she had asked all her questions, and delivered a vehement protest against the tenacity of his self-reproach with regard to Louie—for what decent girl need go wrong unless she has a mind to?—she laid her head down again on David's knee.

'I don't think she cared much about you—I'm sure she couldn't have,' she said slowly, finding a certain pleasure in the words.

David did not answer. He was sunk in memory. How far away lay that world of art and the artist from this dusty, practical life in which he was now immersed! At no time had he been really akin to it. The only art to which he was naturally susceptible was the art of oratory and poetry. Elise had created in him an artificial taste, which had died with his passion. Yet now, as his quickened mind lingered in the past, he felt a certain wide philosophic regret for the complete divorce which had come about between him and so rich a section of human experience.

He was roused from his reverie, which would have reassured her, could she have followed it, more than any direct speech, by a movement from Lucy. Dropping the hand which had once more stolen over his brow, he saw her looking at him with wide, wet eyes.

'David!'

'Yes.'

'Come here! close to me!'

He moved forward, and laid his arm round her shoulders, as she sat in her low chair beside him.

'What is it, dear? I have been keeping you up too late.'

She lifted a hand, and brought his face near to hers.

'David, I am a stupid little thing—but I do understand more than I did, and I would never, *never* desert you for anything,—for any sorrow or trouble in the world!'

The mixture of yearning, pain, triumphant affection in her tone, cannot be rendered in words.

His whole heart melted to her. As he held her to his breast, the hour they had just passed through took for both of them a sacred meaning and importance. Youth was going—their talk had not been the talk of youth. Was true love just beginning?

CHAPTER VIII

'*My God! My God!*'

The cry was David's. He had reeled back against the table in his study, his hand upon an open book, his face turned to Doctor Mildmay, who was standing by the fireplace.

'Of course, I can't be sure,' said the doctor hastily, almost guiltily. 'You must not take it on my authority alone. Try and throw it off your mind. Take your wife up to town to see Selby or Paget, and if I am wrong I shall be too thankful! And, above all, don't frighten her. Take care—she will be down again directly.'

'You say,' said David, thickly, 'that if it were what you suspect, operation would be difficult. Yes, I see there is something of the sort here.'

He turned, shaking all over, to the book beside him, which

was a medical treatise he had just taken down from his scientific bookcase.

'It would be certainly difficult,' said the doctor, frowning, his lower lip pushed forward in a stress of thought, 'but it would have to be attempted. Only, on the temporal bone it will be a puzzle to go deep enough.'

David's eye ran along the page beside him. 'Sarcoma, which was originally regarded with far less terror than cancer (carcinoma), is now generally held by doctors to be more malignant and more deadly. There is much less pain, but surgery can do less, and death is in most cases infinitely more rapid.'

'Hush!' said the doctor, with short decision, 'I hear her coming down again. Let me speak.'

Lucy, who had run upstairs to quiet a yell of crying from Sandy immediately after Doctor Mildmay had finished his examination of her swollen cheek, opened the door as he spoke. She was slightly flushed, and her eyes were more wide open and restless than usual. David was apparently bending over a drawer which he had opened on the farther side of his writing-table. The doctor's face was entirely as usual.

'Well now, Mrs. Grieve,' he said cheerily, 'we have been agreeing—your husband and I—that it will be best for you to go up to London and have that cheek looked at by one of the crack surgeons. They will give you the best advice as to what to do with it. It is not a common ailment, and we are very fine fellows down here, but of course we can't get the experience, in a particular line of cases, of one of the first-rate surgical specialists. Do you think you could go to-morrow? I could make an appointment for you by telegraph to-day.'

Lucy gave a little unsteady, affected laugh.

'I don't see how I can go all in a moment like that,' she said. 'It doesn't matter! Why don't you give me something for it, and it will go away.'

'Oh! but it does matter,' said the doctor, firmly. 'Lumps like that are serious things, and mustn't be trifled with.'

'But what will they want to do to it?' said Lucy nervously. She was standing with one long, thin hand resting lightly on the back of a chair, looking from David, whose face and figure were blurred to her by the dazzle of afternoon light coming in through the window, to Doctor Mildmay.

The doctor cleared his throat.

'They would only want to do what was best for you in every way,' he said; 'you may be sure of that. Could you be very brave if they advised you that it ought to be removed?'

She gave a little shriek.

'What! you mean cut it out—cut it away!' she cried, shaking, and looking at him with the frowning anger of a child. 'Why, it would leave an ugly mark, a hideous mark!'

'No, it wouldn't. The mark would disfigure you much less than the swelling. They would take care to draw the skin to-

gether again neatly, and you could easily arrange your hair a little. But you ought to get a first-rate opinion.'

'What is it? what do you call it?' said Lucy, irritably. 'I can't think why you make such a fuss.'

'Well, it might be various things,' he said evasively. 'Any way, you take my advice, and have it seen to. I can telegraph as I go from here.'

'I could take you up to-morrow,' said David, coming forward in answer to the disturbed look she threw him. Now that her flush had faded, how pale and drooping she was in the strong light! 'It would be better, dear, to do what Doctor Mildmay recommends. And you never mind a day in London, you know.'

Did she detect any difference in the voice? She moved up to him, and he put his arm round her.

'Must I?' she said, helplessly; 'it's such a bore, to-morrow particularly. I had promised to take Sandy out to tea.'

'Well, let that young man go without a treat for once,' said the doctor, laughing. 'He has a deal too many, anyway. Very well, that's settled. I will telegraph as I go to the train. Just come here a moment, Grieve.'

The two went out together. When David returned, any one who had happened to be in the hall would have seen that he could hardly open the sitting-room door, so fumbling were his movements. As he passed through the room to reach the study he caught sight of his own face in a glass, and stopping, with clenched hands, pulled himself together by the effort of his whole being.

When he opened the study-door, Lucy was hunting about his table in a quick, impatient way.

'I can't think where you keep your indiarubber rings, David. I want to put one round a parcel for Dora.'

He found one for her. Then she stood by the fire, as the sunset-light faded into dusk, and poured out to him a story of domestic grievances. Sarah, their cook, wished to leave and be married—it was very unexpected and very inconsiderate, and Lucy did not believe the young man was steady; and how on earth was she to find another cook? It was enough to drive one wild, the difficulty of getting cooks in Manchester.

For nearly an hour, till the supper-bell rang, she stood there, with her foot on the fender, chattering in a somewhat sharp, shrill way. Not one word would she say, or let him say, of London or the doctor's visit.

After supper, as they went back into the study, David looked for the railway-guide. 'The 10.15 will do,' he said. 'Mildmay has made the appointment for three. We can just get up in time.'

'It is great nonsense!' said Lucy, pouting. 'The question is, can we get back? I must get back. I don't want to leave Sandy for the night. He's got a cold.'

It seemed to David that something clutched at his breath and voice. Was it he or some one else that said;—

'That will be too tiring, dear. We shall have to stay the night.'

'No, I *must* get back,' said Lucy, obstinately.

Afterwards she brought her work as usual, and he professed to smoke and read. But the evening passed, for him, beneath his outward quiet, in a hideous whirl of images and sensations, which ultimately wore itself out, and led to a mood of dulness and numbness. Every now and then, as he sat there, with the fire crackling, and the familiar walls and books about him, he felt himself sinking, as it were, in a sudden abyss of horror; then, again, the scene of the afternoon seemed to him absurd, and he despised his own panic. He dwelt upon everything the doctor had said about the rarity, the exceptional nature of such an illness. Well, what is rare does not happen—not to oneself—that was what he seemed to be clinging to at last.

When Lucy went up to bed, he followed her in about a quarter of an hour.

'Why, you are early!' she said, opening her eyes.

'I am tired,' he said. 'There was a great press of work to-day. I want a long night.'

In reality, he could not bear her out of his sight. Hour after hour he tossed restlessly, beside her quiet sleep, till the spring morning broke.

They left Manchester next morning in a bitter east wind. As she passed through the hall to the cab, Lucy left a little note for Dora on the table, with instructions that it should be posted.

'I want her to come and see him at his bedtime,' she said, 'for of course we can't get back for that.'

David said nothing. When they got to the station, he dared not even propose to her the extra comfort of first class, lest he should intensify the alarm he perfectly well divined under her offhand, flighty manner.

By three o'clock they were in the waiting-room of the famous doctor they had come to see. Lucy looked round her nervously as they entered, with quick, dilating nostrils, and across David there swept a sudden choking memory of the trapped and fluttering birds he had sometimes seen in his boyhood struggling beneath a birdcatcher's net on the moors.

As the appointment was at an unusual time, they were not kept waiting very long by the great man. He received them with a sort of kindly distance, made his examination very quickly, and asked her a number of general questions, entering the answers in his large patients' book.

Then he leant back in his chair, looking thoughtfully at Lucy over his spectacles.

'Well,' he said at last, with a perfectly cheerful and business-like voice, 'I am quite clear there is only one thing to be done, Mrs. Grieve. You must have that growth removed.'

Lucy flushed.

'I want you to give me something to take it away,' she said, half sullenly, half defiantly. She was sitting very erect, in a little tight-fitting black jacket, with her small black hat and veil on her knee.

'No, I am sorry to say nothing can be done in that way. If you were my daughter or sister, I should say to you, have that lump removed without a day's, an hour's unnecessary delay. These growths are not to be trifled with.'

He spoke with a mild yet penetrating observance of her. A number of reflections were passing rapidly through his mind. The operation was a most unpromising one, but it was clearly the surgeon's duty to try it. The chances were that it would prolong life which was now speedily and directly threatened, owing to the proximity of the growth to certain vital points.

'When could you do it?' said David, so hoarsely that he had to repeat his question. He was standing with his arm on the mantelpiece, looking down on the surgeon and his wife.

The great man lifted his eyebrows, and looked at his engagement-book attentively.

'I *could* do it to-morrow,' he said at last; 'and the sooner, the better. Have you got lodgings? or can I help you? And—'

Then he stopped, and looked at Lucy. 'Let me settle things with your husband, Mrs. Grieve,' he said, with a kindly smile. 'You look tired after your journey. You will find a fire and some newspapers in the waiting-room.'

And, with a suavity not to be gainsaid, he ushered her himself across the hall, and shut the waiting-room door upon her. Then he came back to David.

A little while after a bell rang, and the man-servant who answered it presently took some brandy into the consulting-room. Lucy meanwhile sat, in a dazed way, looking out of window at the square garden, where the lilacs were already in full leaf in spite of the east wind.

When her husband and the doctor came in she sprang up, looking partly awkward, partly resentful. Why had they been discussing it all without her?

'Well, Mrs. Grieve,' said the doctor, 'your husband is just going to take you on to see the lodgings I recommend. By good luck they are just vacant. Then, if you like them, you know, you can settle in at once.'

'But I haven't brought anything for the night,' cried Lucy in an injured voice, looking at David.

'We will telegraph to Dora, darling,' he said, taking up her bag and umbrella from the table; 'but now we mustn't keep Mr. Selby. He has to go out.'

'How long will it take?' interrupted Lucy, addressing the surgeon. 'Can I get back next day?'

'Oh no! you will have to be four or five days in town. But don't alarm yourself, Mrs. Grieve. You won't know anything at all about the operation itself; your husband will look after you,

and then a little patience—and hope for the best. Now I really must be off. Good-bye to you—good-bye to you.'

And he hurried off, leaving them to find their own cab. When they got in, Lucy said, passionately :—

'I want to go back, David. I want Sandy. I won't go to these lodgings.'

Then courage came to him. He took her hand.

'Dear, dear wife—for my sake—for Sandy's !'

She stared at him—at his white face.

'Shall I die ?' she cried, with the same passionate tone.

'No, no, no !' he said, kissing the quivering hand, and seeing no one but her in the world, though they were driving through the crowd of Regent Street. 'But we must do everything Mr. Selby said. That hateful thing must be taken away—it is so near —think for yourself !—to the eye and the brain ; and it might go downwards to the throat. You will be brave, won't you ? We will look after you so—Dora and I.'

Lucy sank back in the cab, with a sudden collapse of nerve and spirit. David hung over her, comforting her, one moment promising her that in a few days she should have Sandy again, and be quite well ; the next, checked and turned to stone by the memory of the terrible possibilities freely revealed to him in his private talk with Mr. Selby, and by the sense that he might be soothing the present only to make the future more awful.

'David ! she is in such fearful pain ! The nurse says she must have more morphia. They didn't give her enough. Will you run to Mr. Selby's house ? You won't find him, of course—he is on his round—but his assistant, who was with him here just now, went back there. Run for him at once.'

It was Dora who spoke, as she closed the folding-doors of the inner room where Lucy lay. David, who was crouching over the fire in the sitting-room, whither the nurse had banished him for a while, after the operation, sprang up, and disappeared in an instant. Those faint, distant sounds of anguish which had been in his ear for half an hour or more, ever since the doctors had departed, declaring that everything was satisfactorily over, had been more than his manhood could bear.

He returned in an incredibly short space of time with a young surgeon, who at once administered another injection of morphia.

'A highly sensitive patient,' he said to David, 'and the nerves have, no doubt, been badly cut. But she will do now.'

And, indeed, the moaning had ceased. She lay with closed eyes—so small a creature in the wide bed—her head and face swathed in bandages. But the breathing was growing even and soft. She was once more unconscious.

The doctor touched David's hand and went, after a word with the nurse.

'Won't you go into the next room, sir, and have your tea ?

Mrs. Grieve is sure to sleep now,' said the nurse to him in her compassion.

He shook his head, and sat down near the foot of the bed. The nurse went into the dressing-room a moment to speak to Dora, who was doing some unpacking there, and he was left alone with his wife.

The sounds of the street came into the silent room, and every now and then he had a start of agony, thinking that she was moving again—that she was in pain again. But no, she slept; her breath came gently through the childish parted lips, and the dim light—for the nurse had drawn the curtains on the lengthening April day—hid her pallor and the ghastliness of the dressings.

Forty-eight hours ago, and they were in the garden with Sandy! And now life seemed to have passed for ever into this half-light of misery. Everything had dropped away from him—the interests of his business, his books, his social projects. He and she were shut out from the living world. Would she ever rise from that bed again—ever look at him with the old look?

He sat on there, hour after hour, till Dora coaxed him into the sitting-room for a while, and tried to make him take some food. But he could not touch it, and how the sudden gas which the servant lit glared on his sunken eyes! He waited on his companion mechanically, then sat, with his head on his hand, listening for the sound of the doctors' steps.

When they came, they hardly disturbed their patient. She moaned at being touched; but everything was right, and the violent pain which had unexpectedly followed the operation was not likely to recur.

'And what a blessing that she took the chloroform so well, with hardly any after-effects!' said Mr. Selby cheerily, drawing on his gloves in the sitting-room. 'Well, Mr. Grieve, you have got a good nurse, and can leave your wife to her with perfect peace of mind. You must sleep, or you will knock up; let me give you a sleeping draught.'

'Oh! I shall sleep,' said David, impatiently. 'You considered the operation successful—completely succcessful?'

The surgeon looked gravely into the fire.

'I shall know more in a week or so,' he said. 'I have never disguised from you, Mr. Grieve, how serious and difficult the case was. Still, we have done what was right—we can but wait for the issue.'

An hour later Dora looked into the sitting-room, and said softly:—

'She would like to see you, David.'

He went in, holding his breath. There was a night-light in the room, and her face was lying in deep shadow.

He knelt down beside her, and kissed her hand.

'My darling!' he said—and his voice was quite firm and steady—'are you easier now?'

'Yes,' she said faintly. 'Where are you going to sleep?'

'In a room just beyond Dora's room. She could make me hear in a moment if you wanted me.'

Then, as he looked closer, he saw that about her head was thrown the broad white lace scarf she had worn round her neck on the journey up. And as he bent to her, she suddenly opened her languid eyes, and gazed at him full. For the moment it was as though she were given back to him.

'I made Dora put it on,' she said feebly, moving her hand towards the lace. 'Does it hide all those nasty bandages?'

'Yes. I can't see them at all.'

'Is it pretty?'

The little gleam of a smile nearly broke down his self-command.

'Very,' he said, with a quivering lip.

She closed her eyes again.

'Oh! I hope Lizzie will look after Sandy,' she said after a while, with a long sigh.

Not a word now of wilfulness, of self-assertion! After the sullenness and revolt of the day before, which had lasted intermittently almost up to the coming of the doctors, nothing could be more speaking, more pathetic, than this helpless acquiescence.

'I mustn't stay with you,' he said. 'You ought to be going to sleep again. Nurse will give you something if you can't.'

'I'm quite comfortable,' she said, sleepily. 'There isn't any pain.'

And she seemed to pass quickly and easily into sleep as he sat looking at her.

An hour or two later, Dora, who could not sleep from the effects of fatigue and emotion, was lying in her uncomfortable stretcher-bed, thinking with a sort of incredulity of all that had passed since David's telegram had reached her the day before, or puzzling herself to know how her employers could possibly spare her for another three or four days' holiday, when she was startled by some recurrent sounds from the room beyond her own. David was sleeping there, and Dora, with her woman's quickness, had at once perceived that the partition between them was very thin, and had been as still as a mouse in going to bed.

The sound alarmed her, though she could not make it out. Instinctively she put her ear to the wall. After a minute or two she hastily moved away, and hiding her head under the bedclothes, fell to soft crying and praying.

For it was the deep rending sound of suppressed weeping, the weeping of a strong man who believes himself alone with his grief and with God. That she should have heard it at all filled her with a sort of shame.

Things, however, looked much brighter on the following morning. The wound caused by the operation was naturally sore and stiff, and the dressing was painful; but when the

doctor's visit was over, and Lucy was lying in the halo of her white scarf on her fresh pillows, in a room which Dora and the nurse had made daintily neat and straight, her own cheerfulness was astonishing. She made Dora go out and get her some patterns for Sandy's summer suits, and when they came she lay turning them over from time to time, or weakly twisting first one and then another round her finger. She was, of course, perpetually anxious to know when she would be well, and whether the scar would be very bad; but on the whole she was a docile and promising patient, and she even began to see some gleams of virtue in Mr. Selby, for whom at first she had taken the strongest dislike.

Meanwhile, David, haunted always by a horrible knowledge which was hid from her, could get nothing decided for the future out of the doctors.

'We must wait,' said Mr. Selby; 'for the present all is healing well, but I wish we could get up her general strength. It must have been running down badly of late.'

Whereupon David was left reproaching himself for blindness and neglect, the real truth being that, with any one of Lucy's thin elastic frame and restless temperament, a good deal of health-degeneration may go on without its becoming conspicuous.

A few days passed. Dora was forced to go back to work; but as she was to take up her quarters at the Merton Road house, and to write long accounts of Sandy to his mother every day, Lucy saw her depart with considerable equanimity. Dora left her patient on the sofa, a white and ghostly figure, but already talking eagerly of returning to Manchester in a week. When she heard the cab roll off, Lucy lay back on her cushions and counted the minutes till David should come in from the British Museum, whither, because of her improvement, he had gone to clear up one or two bibliographical points. She caressed the thought of being left alone with him, except for the nurse—left to that tender and special care he was bestowing on her so richly, and through which she seemed to hold and know him afresh.

When he came in she reproached him for being late, and both enjoyed and scouted his pleas in answer.

'Well, I don't care,' she said obstinately; 'I wanted you.'

Then she heaved a long sigh.

'David, I made nurse let me look at the horrid place this morning. I shall always be a fright—it's no good.'

But he knew her well enough to perceive that she was not really very downcast, and that she had already devised ways and means of hiding the mark as much as possible.

'It doesn't hurt or trouble you at all?' he asked her anxiously.

'No, of course not,' she said impatiently. 'It's getting well. Do ask nurse to bring me my tea.'

The nurse brought it, and she and David spoiled their invalid with small attentions.

'It's nice being waited on,' said Lucy when it was over, settling herself to rest with a little sigh of sensuous satisfaction.

Another week passed, and all seemed to be doing well, though Mr. Selby would say nothing as yet of allowing her to move. Then came a night when she was restless; and in the morning the wound troubled her, and she was extremely irritable and depressed. The moment the nurse gave him the news at his door in the early morning, David's face changed. He dressed, and went off for Mr. Selby, who came at once.

'Yes,' he said gravely, after his visit, as he shut the folding-doors of Lucy's room behind him—'yes, I am sorry to say there is a return. Now the question is, what to do.'

He came and stood by the fireplace, legs apart, head down, debating with himself. David, haggard and unshorn, watched him helplessly.

'We *could* operate again,' he said thoughtfully, 'but it would cut her about terribly. And I can't disguise from you, Mr. Grieve'—as he raised his head and caught sight of his companion his tone softened insensibly—'that, in my opinion, it would be all but useless. I more than suspect, from my observation to-day, that there are already secondary growths in the lung. Probably they have been there for some time.'

There was a silence.

'Then we can do nothing,' said David.

'Nothing effectual, alas!' said the doctor, slowly. 'Palliatives, of course, we can use, of many kinds. But there will not be much pain.'

'Will it be long?'

David was standing with his back to the doctor, looking out of window, and Mr. Selby only just heard the words.

'I fear it will be a rapid case,' he said reluctantly. 'This return is rapid, and there are many indications this morning I don't like. But don't wish it prolonged, my dear sir!—have courage for her and yourself.'

The words were not mere platitudes—the soul of a good man looked from the clear and masterful eyes. He described the directions he had left with the nurse, and promised to come again in the evening. Then he grasped David's hand, and would have gone away quickly. But David, following him mechanically to the door, suddenly recollected himself.

'Could we move her?' he asked; 'she may crave to get home, or to some warm place.'

'Yes, you can move her,' the doctor said, decidedly. 'With an invalid-carriage and a nurse you can do it. We will talk about it when I come again to-night.'

'A ghastly case,' he was saying to himself as he went down-stairs, 'and, thank heaven! a rare one. Strange and mysterious thing it is, with its ghoulish preference for the young. Poor thing! poor thing! and yesterday she was so cheerful—she would tell me all about her boy.'

CHAPTER IX

THE history of the weeks that followed shall be partly told in David's own words, gathered from those odds-and-ends of paper, old envelopes, the half-sheets of letters, on which he would write sometimes in those hours when he was necessarily apart from Lucy, thrusting them on his return between the leaves of his locked journal, clinging to them as the only possible record of his wife's ebbing life, yet passionately avoiding the sight of them when they were once written.

'RYDAL, AMBLESIDE: *May 5th.*—We arrived this afternoon. The day has been glorious. The mountains round the head of the lake, as we drove along it at a foot's pace that the carriage might not shake her, stood out in the sun; the light wind drove the cloud-shadows across their blues and purples; the water was a sheet of light; the larches were all out, though other trees are late; and every breath was perfume.

'But she was too weary to look at it; and before we had gone two miles, it seemed to me that I could think of nothing but the hateful length of the drive, and the ups and downs of the road.

'When we arrived, she would walk into the cottage, and before nurse or I realised what she was doing, she went straight through the little passage which runs from front to back, out into the garden. She stood a moment—in her shawls, with the little white hood she has devised for herself drawn close round her head and face—looking at the river with its rocks and foaming water, at the shoulder of Nab Scar above the trees, at the stone house with the red blinds opposite.

'"It looks just the same," she said, and the tears rolled down her cheeks.

'We brought her in—nurse and I—and when she had been put comfortably on the low couch I had sent from London beforehand, and had taken some food, she was a little cheered. She made us draw her to the window of the little back sitting-room, and she lay looking out till it was almost dark. But as I foresaw, the pain of coming is more than equal to any pleasure there may be.

'Yet she would come. During those last days in London, when she would hardly speak to us, when she lay in the dark in that awful room all day, and every attempt to feed her or comfort her made her angry, I could not, for a long time, get her to say what she wished about moving, except that she would not go back to Manchester.

'Her hand-glass could not be kept from her, and one morning she cried bitterly when she saw that she could no longer so arrange her laces as to completely hide the disfigurement of the right side of the face.

'"No! I will *never* go back to Merton Road!" she cried, throwing down the glass; "no one shall see me!"

'But at night, after I hoped she was asleep, she sent nurse to say that she wanted to go to—*Rydal!*—to the same cottage by the Rotha we had stayed at on our honeymoon. Nurse said she could—she could have an invalid carriage from door to door. Would I write for the rooms at once? And Sandy could join us there.

'So, after nine years, we are here again. The house is empty. We have our old rooms. Nothing is changed in the valley. After she was asleep, I went out along the river, keeping to a tiny path on the steep right bank till I reached a wooden bridge, and then through a green bit, fragrant with fast-springing grass and flowers, to that point beside the lake I remember so well. I left her there one day, sitting, and dabbling in the water, while I ran up Loughrigg. She was nineteen. How she tripped over the hills!

'To-night there was a faint moon. The air was cold, but quite still, and the reflections, both of the islands and of Nab Scar, seemed to sink into unfathomed depths of shadowy water. Loughrigg rose boldly to my left against the night sky; I could see the rifle-butts and the soft blackness of the great larch-plantation on the side of Silver How.

'There, to my right, was the tower of the little church, whitish against the woods, and close beside it, amid the trees, I felt the presence of Wordsworth's house, though I could not see it.

'O poet! who wrote for me, not knowing—oh, heavenly valley!—you have but one voice; it haunts my ears:—

> '*Thy mornings showed, thy nights concealed,*
> *The bowers where Lucy played;*
> *And thine, too, is the last green field*
> *That Lucy's eyes surveyed.*'

'*May* 10*th*.—She never speaks of dying, and I dare not speak of it. But sometimes she is like a soul wandering in terror through a place of phantoms. Her eyes grow large and strained, she pushes me away from her. And she often wakes at night, sinking in black gulfs of fear, from which I cannot save her.

'Oh, my God! my heart is torn, my life is sickened with pity! Give me some power to comfort—take from me this impotence, this numbness. She, so little practised in suffering, so much of a child still, called to bear this *monstrous* thing. Savage, incredible Nature! But behind Nature there is God—

'To-night she asked me to pray with her—asked it with reproach. "You never say good things to me now!" And I could not explain myself.

'It was in this way. When Dora was with her, she used to read and pray with her. I would not have interfered for the world. When Dora left, I thought she would use the little manual of prayers for the sick that Dora had left behind; the nurse, who is a religious woman, and reads to her a good deal,

would have read this whenever she wished. One night I offered to read it to her myself, but she would not let me. And for the rest—in spite of our last talk—I was so afraid of jarring her, of weakening any thought that might have sustained her.

'But to-night she asked me, and for the first time since our earliest married life I took her hand and prayed. Afterwards she lay still, till suddenly her lip began to quiver.

'"I wasn't ever so very bad. I did love you and Sandy, and I did help that girl,—you know—that Dora knew, who went wrong. And I am so ill—*so* ill!"'

'*May* 20*th.*—A fortnight has passed. Sandy and his nurse are lodging at a house on the hill; every morning he comes down here, and I take him for a walk. He was very puzzled and grave at first when he saw her, but now he has grown used to her look, and he plays merrily about among the moss-grown rocks beside the river, while she lies in the slung couch, to which nurse and I carry her on a little stretcher, watching him.

'There was a bright hour this morning. We are in the midst of a spell of dry and beautiful weather, such as often visits this rainy country in the early summer, before any visitors come. The rhododendrons and azaleas are coming out in the gardens under Loughrigg—some little copses here and there are sheets of blue—and the green is rushing over the valley. We had put her among the rocks under a sycamore-tree—a singularly beautiful tree, with two straight stems dividing its rounded masses of young leaf. There were two wagtails perching on the stones in the river, and swinging their long tails; and the light flickered through the trees on to the water foaming round the stones or slipping in brown cool sheets between them. There was a hawthorn-tree in bloom near by; in the garden of the house opposite a woman was hanging out some clothes to dry; the Grasmere coach passed with a clatter, and Sandy with the two children from the lodgings ran out to the bridge to look at it.

'Yes, she had a moment of enjoyment! I bind the thought of it to my heart. Lizzie was sitting sewing near the edge of the river, that she might look after Sandy. He was told not to climb on to the stones in the current of the stream, but as he was bent on catching the vain, provoking wagtails who strutted about on them, the prohibition was unendurable. As soon as Lizzie's head was bent over her work, he would clamber in and out till he reached some quite forbidden rock; and then, looking back with dancing eyes and the tip of his little tongue showing between his white teeth, he would say, "Go on with your work, Nana, *darling!*"—And his mother's look never left him all the time.

'Once he had been digging with his little spade among the fine grey gravel silted up here and there among the hollows of the rocks. He had been digging with great energy, and for May the air was hot. Lizzie looked up and said to him, "Sandy, it's

time for me to take you to bed"—that is, for his midday sleep. "Yes," he said, with a languid air, sitting down on a stone with his spade between his knees—"yes, I think I'd better come to bed. My heart is very dreary." "What do you mean?" "My heart is very dreary—dreary means tired, you know." "Oh, indeed!—where is your heart?" "Here," he said, laying his hand lackadaisically on the small of his back.

'And then she smiled, for the first time for so many, many days! I came to sit by her; she left her hand in mine; and after the child was gone the morning slipped by peacefully, with only the sound of the river and the wheels of a few passing carts to break the silence.

'In the afternoon she asked me if I should not have to go back to Manchester. How could all those men and those big printing-rooms get on without me? I told her that John reported to me every other day; that a batch of our best men had sent word to me, through him, that everything was going well, and I was not to worry; that there had been a strike of some importance among the Manchester compositors, but that our men had not joined.

'She listened to it all, and then she shut her eyes and said:—

'"I'm glad you did that about the men. I don't understand quite—but I'm glad."

'. . . You can see nothing of her face now in its white draperies but the small, pointed chin and nose; and then the eyes, with their circles of pain, the high centre of the brow, and a wave or two of her pretty hair tangled in the lace edge of the hood.

'"*My darling,—my darling! God have mercy upon us!*"'

'*June 2nd.*—"*For the hardness of your hearts he wrote you this commandment.*" How profoundly must he who spoke the things reported in this passage have conceived of marriage! *For the hardness of your hearts.* Himself governed wholly by the inward voice, unmoved by the mere external authority of the great Mosaic name, he handles the law presented to him with a sort of sad irony. The words imply the presence in him of a slowly formed and passionately held ideal. Neither sin, nor suffering, nor death can nor ought to destroy the marriage bond, once created. It is not there for our pleasure, nor for its mere natural object,—but to form the soul.

'The world has marched since that day, in law—still more, as it supposes, in sentiment. But are we yet able to bear such a saying?

'. . . Then compare with these words the magnificent outburst in which, a little earlier, he sweeps from his path his mother and his brethren. There are plentiful signs—take the "corban" passage, for instance, still more, the details of the Prodigal Son—of the same deep and tender thinking as we find in the most authentic sayings about marriage applied to the

parental and brotherly relation. But he himself, realising, as it would seem, with peculiar poignancy, the sacredness of marriage and the claim of the family, is yet alone, and must be alone to the end. The fabric of the Kingdom rises before him; his soul burns in the fire of his message; and the lost sheep call.

'She has been fairly at ease this afternoon, and I have been lying on the grass by the lake, pondering these things. The narrative of Mark, full as it is already of legendary accretion, brings one so close to him; the living breath and tone are in one's ears.'

'*June 4th.*—These last two days she is much worse. The local trouble is stationary; but there must be developments we know nothing of elsewhere. For she perishes every day before our eyes—we cannot give her sleep—there is such *malaise*, emaciation, weariness.

'She is wonderfully patient. It seems to me, looking back, that a few days ago came a change. I cannot remember any words that marked it, but it is as though—without our knowing it —her eyes had turned themselves irrevocably from us and from life, to the hills of death. Yet—strange!—she takes more notice of those about her. Yesterday she showed an interest just like her old self in the children's going to a little fête at Ambleside. She would have them all in—Sandy and the landlady's two little girls—to look at them when they were dressed. —What strikes me with awe is that she has no more tears, though she says every now and then the most touching things—things that pierce to the very marrow.

'She told me to-day that she wished to see her father. I have written to him this evening.'

'*June 6th.*—Purcell has been here a few hours, and has gone back to-night. She received him with perfect calmness, though they have not spoken to each other for ten years. He came in with his erect, military port and heavy tread, looking little older, though his hair is gray. But he blenched at sight of her.

'"You must kiss me on the forehead," she said to him feebly, "but, please, very gently."

'So he kissed her, and sat down. He cleared his throat often, and did not know what to say. But she asked him, by degrees, about some of her mother's relations whom she had not seen for long, then about himself and his health. The ice thawed, but the talk was difficult. Towards the end he inquired of her—and, I think, with genuine feeling—whether she had "sought salvation." She said faintly, "No;" and he, looking shocked and shaken, bade her, with very much of his old voice and manner, and all the old phraseology, "lay hold of the merits of Jesus."

'Towards the end of his exhortations she interrupted him.

'"You must see Sandy, and you must kiss me again. I

wasn't a good daughter. But, oh! why wouldn't you make friends with me and David? I tried—you remember I tried?"

'"I am ready to forgive all the past," he said, drawing himself up; "I can say no more."

'"Well, kiss me!" she said, in a melancholy whisper. And he kissed her again.

'Then I would not let him exhaust her any more, or take any set farewell. I hurried him away as though for tea, and nurse and I pronounced against his seeing her again.

'On our walk to the coach he broke out once more, and implored me, with much unction and some dignity, not to let my infidel opinions stand in the way, but to summon some godly man to see and talk with her. I said that a neighbouring clergyman had been several times to see her, since, as he probably knew, she had been a Churchwoman for years. In my inward frenzy I seemed to be hurling all sorts of wild sayings at his head; but I don't believe they came to speech, for I know at the end we parted with the civility of strangers. I promised to send him news. What amazed me was his endless curiosity about the details of her illness. He would have the whole history of the operation, and all the medical opinion she could remember from the nurse. And on our walk he renewed the subject; but I could bear it no more.

'Oh, my God! what does it matter to me *why* she is dying?'

'Then, when I got home, I found her rather excited, and she whispered to me: "He asked me if I had sought salvation, and I said No. I didn't seek it, David; but it comes—when you are here." Then her chest heaved, but with that strange instinct of self-preservation she would not say a word more, nor would she let me weep. She asked me to hold her hands in mine, and so she slept a little.

'Dora writes that in a fortnight more she can get a holiday of a week or two. Will she be in time?

'It is two months to-day since we went to London.'

On one of the last days in June Dora arrived. It seemed to her that Lucy could have but a few days to live. Working both outwardly and inwardly, the terrible disease had all but done its work. She had nearly lost the power of swallowing, and lived mainly on the morphia injections which were regularly administered to her. But at intervals she spoke a good deal, and quite clearly.

And Dora had not been six hours with her before a curious thing happened. The relation which, ever since their meeting as girls, had prevailed between her and Lucy, seemed to be suddenly reversed. She was no longer the teacher and sustainer; in the little dying creature there was now a remote and heavenly power; it could not be described, but Dora yielded with tears to the awe and sovereignty of it.

She saw with some plainness, however, that it depended on

the relation between the husband and wife. Since she had been with them last, it had been touched—this relation—by a Divine alchemy. The self in both seemed to have dropped away. The two lives were no longer two, but one—he cherishing, she leaning.

The night she came she pressed Lucy to take the Holy Communion. Lucy assented, and the Communion was administered, with David kneeling beside her pillow. But afterwards Lucy was troubled, and when Dora proposed at night to read and pray with her, she said faintly, 'No; David does." And thenceforward, though she was all gentleness, Dora did not find it very easy to get religious speech with her, and went often—poor Dora!—sadly, and in fear.

Dora had been in the house five days, when new trouble followed on the old. David one morning received a letter from Louie, forwarded from Manchester, and when Dora followed him into the garden with a message, she found him walking about distracted.

'Read it!' he said.

The letter was but a few scrawled lines:—

'Cécile has got diphtheria. Our doctor says so, but he is a devil. I must have another—the best—and there is no money. If she dies, you will never see me again, I swear. I dare say you will think it a good job, but now you know.'

The writing was hardly legible, and the paper had been twisted and crumpled by the haste of the writer.

'What is to be done?' said David, in pale despair. 'Can I leave this house one hour—one minute?'

Then a sudden thought struck him. He looked at Dora with a flash of appeal.

'Dora, you have been our friend always, and you have been good to Louie. Will you go? I need not say all shall be made easy. I could get John to take you over. He has been several times to Paris for me this last five years, and would be a help.'

That was indeed a struggle for Dora! Her heart clung to these people she loved, and the *dévote* in her yearned for those last opportunities with the dying, on the hope of which she still fed herself. To go from this deathbed, to that fierce mother, in those horrible surroundings!

But just as she had taught Louie in the old days because David Grieve asked her, so now she went, in the end, because he asked her.

She was to be away six days at least. But the doctor thought it possible she might return to find Lucy alive. David made every possible arrangement—telegraphed to Louie that she was coming; and to John directing him to meet her at Warrington and take her on; wrote out the times of her journey; the address of a *pension* in the Avenue Friedland, kept by an English lady, to which he happened to be able to direct her; and the name of the English lawyer in Paris who had advised him at the time of Louie's marriage, had done various things for him since, and would, he knew, be a friend in need.

Twelve hours after the arrival of Louie's letter, Dora tore herself from Lucy. 'Don't say good-bye,' said David, his face working, and to spare him and Lucy she went as though she were just going across the road for the night. David saw her—a white and silent traveller—into the car that was to take her on the first stage of a journey which, apart from everything else, alarmed her provincial imagination. David's gratitude threw her into a mist of tears as she drove off. Surely, of all the self-devoted acts of Dora's life, this mission and this leave-taking were not the least!

Lucy heard the wheels roll away. A stony, momentary sense of desolation came over her as this one more strand was cut. But David came in, and the locked lips relaxed. It had been necessary to tell her the reason of Dora's departure. And in the course of the long June evening David gathered from the motion of her face that she wished to speak to him. He bent down to her, and she murmured :—

'Tell Louie I wished I'd been kinder—I pray God will let her keep Cécile. . . . She must come to Manchester again when I'm gone.'

The night-watch was divided between David and the nurse. At five o'clock in the summer morning—brilliant once more after storm and rain—he injected morphia into the poor wasted arm, and she took a few drops of brandy. Then, after a while, she seemed to sleep; and he, stretched on a sofa beside her, and confident of waking at the slightest sound, fell into a light doze.

Lucy woke when the sun was high, rather more than an hour later. Her eyes were teased by a chink in the curtain ; she hardly knew what it was, but her dying sense shrank, and she vaguely thought of calling David. But as she lay, propped up, she looked down on him, and she saw his pale, sunken face, with the momentary softening of rest upon it. And there wandered through her mind fragments of his sayings to her in that last evening of theirs together in the Manchester house,—especially, '*It can only be proved by living—by every victory over the evil self.*' In its mortal fatigue her memory soon lost hold of words and ideas ; but she had the strength not to wake him.

Then as she lay in what seemed to her this scorching light—in reality it was one little ray which had evaded the thick curtains—a flood of joy seemed to pour into her soul. 'I shall not live beyond to-day,' she thought, 'but I know now I shall see him again.'

When at last she made a faint movement, and he woke at once, he saw that the end was very near. He thought of Dora in Paris with a pang, but there was no help for it. Through that day he never stirred from her side in the darkened room, and she sank fast. She spoke only one connected sentence—to say with great difficulty, 'Dying is long—but—*not*—painful.' The words woke in him a strange echo ; they had been among the last words

of 'Lias, his childhood's friend. But she breathed one or two names—the landlady of the lodging-house, and the servants, especially the nurse.

They came in on tiptoe and kissed her. She had already thanked each one.

Sandy was just going to bed, when David carried him in to her. One of her last conscious looks was for him. He was in his nightgown, with bare feet, holding his father tight round the neck, and whimpering. They bent down to her, and he kissed her on the cheek, as David told him, 'very softly.' Then he cried to go away from this still, grey mother. David gave him to the nurse and came back.

The day passed, and the night began. The doctor in his evening visit said it would be a marvel if she saw the morrow. David sat beside the bed, his head bowed on the hand he held; the nurse was in the farther corner. His whole life and hers passed before him; and in his mind there hovered perpetually the image of the potter and the wheel. He and she—the Hand so unfaltering, so divine had bound them there, through resistance and anguish unspeakable. And now, for him there was only a sense of absolute surrender and submission, which in this hour of agony and exaltation rose steadily into the ecstasy—ay, the *vision* of faith! In the pitying love which had absorbed his being he had known that 'best' at last whereat his craving youth had grasped; and losing himself wholly had found his God.

And for her, had not her weak life become one flame of love—a cup of the Holy Grail, beating and pulsing with the Divine Life?

The dawn came. She pulled restlessly at her white wrapper—seemed to be in pain—whispered something of 'a weight.' Then the last change came over her. She opened her eyes—but they saw no longer. Nature ceased to resist, and the soul had long since yielded itself. With a meekness and piteousness of look not to be told, never to be forgotten, Lucy Grieve passed away.

CHAPTER X

THE very day after Lucy had been carried to her last rest in that most poetic of all graveyards which bends its grassy shape to the encircling Rotha and holds in trust the ashes of Wordsworth, David Grieve started for Paris.

He had that morning received a telegram from Dora: 'Louie disappeared. Have no clue. Can you come?' Two days before, the news of Cécile's death from diphtheria had reached him in a letter from poor Dora, rendered almost inarticulate by her grief for Lucy and bitter regret for her own absence from her cousin's deathbed, mingling with her pity for Louie's unfortunate child and her dread and panic with regard to Louie herself.

But so long as that white form lay shrouded in the cottage upper room, he could not move—and he could scarcely feel.

The telegram broke in upon a sort of lethargy which had held him ever since Lucy's last breath. He started at once. On the way he spent two hours at Manchester. On the table in his study there still lay the medical book he had taken down from his scientific shelf on the night of Dr. Mildmay's visit; in Lucy's room her dresses hung as she had left them on the doors; a red woollen cap she had been knitting for Sandy was thrown down half finished on the dressing-table. Of the hour he spent in that room, putting away some of the little personal possessions, still warm as it were from her touch, let no more be said.

When he reached Paris he inquired for Dora at the *pension* in the Avenue Friedland, to which he had sent her. John, who had also written to him, and was still in Paris, was staying, he knew, at an hotel on the Quai Voltaire. But he went to Dora first.

Dora, however, was not at home. She had left for him the full address of the house in the Paris *banlieue* where she had found Louie, and full directions as to how to reach it. He took one of the open cabs and drove thither in the blazing July sun.

An interminable drive!—the whole length of the Avenue de la Grande-Armée and the Avenue de Neuilly, past the Seine and the Rond Pont de Courbevoie, until at last turning to the left into the wide and villainously paved road that leads to Rueil, Bougival, and St. Germain, the driver and David between them with difficulty discovered a side street which answered to the name Dora had several times given.

They had reached one of the most squalid parts of the western *banlieue.* Houses half built and deserted in the middle, perhaps by some bankrupt builder; small traders, bakers, *charcutiers*, fried-fish sellers, lodged in structures of lath and plaster, just run up and already crumbling; *cabarets* of the roughest and meanest kind, adorned with high-sounding devices,—David mechanically noticed one which had blazoned on its stained and peeling front, *A la renaissance du Phénix ;*—heaps of rubbish and garbage with sickly children playing among them; here and there some small, ill-smelling factory; a few melancholy shrubs in new-made gardens, drooping and festering under a cruel sun in a scorched and unclean soil:—the place repelled and outraged every sense. Was it here that little Cécile had passed from a life of pain to a death of torture?

He rang at a sinister and all but windowless house, which he was able to identify from Dora's directions. John opened to him, and in a little room to the right, which looked on to a rank bit of neglected garden, he found Dora. A woman, with a scowling brow and greedy mouth, disappeared into the back premises as he entered.

Dora and he clasped hands. Then the sight of his face broke down even her long-practised self-control, and she laid her head down on the table and sobbed. But he showed little emotion; while John, standing shyly on the other side of the room, and the weeping Dora could hardly find words to tell their own story, so

overwhelmed were they by those indelible signs upon him of all that he had gone through.

He asked them rapidly a number of questions.

In the first place Dora explained that she and John were engaged in putting together whatever poor possessions the house contained of a personal kind, that they might not either be seized for debt, or fail into the claws of the old *bonne*, a woman of the lowest type, who had already plundered all she could. As to the wretched husband, very little information was forthcoming. John believed that he had been removed to the hospital in a state of alcoholic paralysis the very week that Cécile was taken ill; at any rate he had made no sign.

The rest of the story which Dora had to tell may be supplemented by a few details which were either unknown to his informants, or remained unknown to David.

Louie, on her return to Paris with David's hundred pounds, had promptly staked the greater part of it in certain Bourse speculations. She was quite as sorely in need of money as she had professed to be while in Manchester, but for more reasons than one, as David had uncomfortably suspected. Not only did her husband strip her of anything he could lay hands on, but a certain fair-haired Alsatian artist a good deal younger than herself had for some months been preying upon her. What his hold upon her precisely was, Father Lenoir, her director, when David went to see him, either could not or—because the matter was covered by the confessional seal—would not say. The artist, Brénart by name, was a handsome youth, with a droll facile tongue, and a recklessness of temper matching her own. He became first known to her as one of her husband's drinking companions, then, dazzled by the wife's mad beauty, he began to haunt the handsome Madame Montjoie, as many other persons had haunted her before him,—with no particular results except to increase the arrogant self-complacency with which Louie bore herself among her Catholic friends.

In the first year of his passion, Brénart came into a small inheritance, much of which he spent on jewellery and other presents for his idol. She accepted them without scruple, and his hopes naturally rose high. But in a few months he ran through his money, his drinking habits, under Montjoie's lead, grew upon him, and he fell rapidly into a state of degradation which would have made it very easy for Louie to shake him off, had she been so minded.

But by this time he had, no doubt, a curious spell for her. He was a person of considerable gifts, an etcher of fantastic promise, a clever musician, and the owner of a humorous *carillon* of talk, to quote M. Renan's word, which made life in his neighbourhood perpetually amusing for those, at any rate, who took the grossness of its themes as a matter of course. Louie found on the one hand that she could not do without him, in her miserable existence; on the other that if he was not to starve she must

keep him. His misfortunes revealed the fact that there was neither chivalry nor delicacy in him ; and he learnt to live upon her with surprising quickness, and on the most romantic pretexts.

So she made her pilgrimage to Manchester for money, and then she played with her money to make it more, on the Bourse. But clever as she was, luck was against her, and she lost. Her losses made her desperate. So too did the behaviour of her husband, who robbed her whenever he could, and spent most of his time on the pavements of Paris, dragging himself from one low drinking-shop to another, only coming home to cheat her out of fresh supplies, and goad his wife to hideous scenes of quarrel and violence, which frightened the life out of Cécile. Brénart, whom she could no longer subsidise, kept aloof, for mixed reasons of his own. And the landlord, not to be trifled with any longer, gave them summary notice of eviction.

While she was in these straits, Father Lenoir, who even during these months of vacillating passion and temptation had exercised a certain influence over her, came to call upon her one afternoon, being made anxious by her absence from Ste. Eulalie. He found a wild-eyed haggard woman in a half-dismantled apartment, whom, for the first time, he could not affect by any of those arts of persuasion or rebuke, in which his long experience as a guide of souls had trained him. She would tell him nothing either about her plans, or her husband ; she did not respond to his skilful and reproachful comments upon her failure to give them assistance in a recent great function at Ste. Eulalie ; nor was she moved by the tone of solemn and fatherly exhortation into which he gradually passed. He left her, fearing the worst.

On the following morning she fled to the wretched house on the outskirts of Paris where Dora had found her. She went thither to escape from her husband ; to avoid the landlord's pursuit ; to cut herself adrift from the clergy of Ste. Eulalie, and to concert with Brénart a new plan of life. But Brénart failed to meet her there, and, a very few days after the flight, Cécile, already worn to a shadow, sickened with diphtheria. Either the seeds were already in her when they left Paris, or she was poisoned by the half-finished drainage and general insanitary state of the quarter to which they had removed.

From the moment the child took to her bed, Louie fell into the blackest despair. She had often ill-used her daughter during these last months ; the trembling child, always in the house, had again and again been made the scapegoat of her mother's miseries ; but she no sooner threatened to die than Louie threw everything else in the world aside and was madly determined she should live.

She got a doctor, of an inferior sort, from the neighbourhood, and when he seemed to her to bungle, and the child got no better, she drove him out of the house with contumely. Then she herself tried to caustic Cécile's throat, or she applied some of the old-wives' remedies, suggested by the low servant she had taken. The

result was that the poor little victim was brought to the edge of the grave, and Louie, reduced to abjectness, went and humbled herself to the doctor and brought him back. This time he told her bluntly that the child was dying and nothing could save her. Then, in her extremity, she telegraphed to David. Her brother had written to her twice since the beginning of Lucy's illness; but when she sent her telegram, all remembrance of her sister-in-law had vanished from Louie's mind—Lucy might never have existed; and whether she was alive or dead mattered nothing.

When Dora came, she found the child speechless, and near the end. Tracheotomy had been performed, but its failure was already clear. It seemed a question of hours. John went off post-haste for a famous doctor. The great man came, agreed with the local practitioner that nothing more could be done, and that death was imminent. Louie, beside herself, first turned and rent him, and then fell in a dead faint beside Cécile's bed. While the nurse, whom John had also brought from Paris, was tending both mother and daughter, Dora sent John—who in these years had acquired a certain smattering of foreign languages under the pressure of printing-room needs and David's counsel—to inquire for and fetch a priest. She was in an agony lest the child should die without the sacraments of her Church.

The priest came—a young man of a heavy peasant type—bearing the Host. Never did Dora forget that scene—the emaciated child gasping her life away, the strange people, dimly seen amid the wreaths of incense, who seemed to her to have flocked in from the street in the wake of the priest, to look—the sacred words and gestures in the midst, which, because of the quick unintelligible Latin, she could only follow as a mystery of ineffable and saving power, the same, so she believed, for Anglican and Catholic—and by the bedside the sullen erect form of the mother, who could not be induced to take any part whatever in the ceremony.

But when it was all over, and the little procession which had brought the Host was forming once more, Louie thrust Dora and the nurse violently away from the bed, and bent her ear down to Cécile's mouth. She gave a wild and hideous cry; then drawing herself to her full height, with a tragic magnificence of movement she stretched out one shaking hand over the poor little wasted body, while with the other she pointed to the priest in his white officiating dress.

'Go out of this house!—go this *instant!* Who brought you in? Not I! I tell you,—last night'—she flung the phrases out in fierce gasps—'I gave God the chance. I said to Him, Make Cécile well, and I'll behave myself—I'll listen to Father Lenoir. Much good I've got by it all this time!—but I will. I'll live on a crust, and I'll give all I can skin and scrape to those people at Ste. Eulalie. If not—then I'll go to the devil—*to the devil!* Do you hear? I swore that.'

Her voice sank to a hoarse whisper; she bent down, still keeping everyone at bay and at a distance from her dead child,—

though Dora ran to her—her head turned over her shoulder, her glowing eyes of hatred fixed upon the priest.

'She is mad!' he said to himself, receding quickly, lest the sacred burden he bore should suffer any indignity.

At that moment she fell heavily on her knees beside the bed insensible, her dark head lying on Cécile's arm. Dora, in a pale trance of terror, closed little Cécile's weary eyes, the nurse cleared the room, and they laid Louie on her bed.

When she revived, she crawled to the place where Cécile lay in her white grave-dress strewn with flowers, and again put everyone away, locking herself in with the body. But the rules of interment in the case of infectious diseases are strict in France; the authorities concerned intervened; and after scenes of indescribable misery and violence, the little corpse was carried away, and, thanks to Dora's and John's care, received tender and reverent burial.

The mother was too exhausted to resist any more. When Dora came back from the funeral, the nurse told her that Madame Montjoie, after having refused all meat or drink for two days, had roused herself from what seemed the state of stupor in which the departure of the funeral procession had left her, had asked for brandy, which had been given her, and had then, of her own accord, swallowed a couple of opium pills, which the doctor had so far vainly prescribed for her, and was now heavily asleep.

Dora went to her own bed, too tired to stand, yet inexpressibly relieved. Her bed was a heap of wraps contrived for her by the nurse on the floor of the lower room—a bare den, reeking of damp, which called itself the *salon*. But she had never rested anywhere with such helpless thankfulness. For some hours at least, agony and conflict were still, and she had a moment in which to weep for Lucy, the news of whose death had now lain for two days a dragging weight at her heart. Hateful memory! —she had forced her way in to Louie with the letter, thinking in her innocence that the knowledge of the brother's bereavement must touch the sister, or at least momentarily divert her attention: and Louie had dashed it down with the inconceivable words,—Dora's cheek burnt with anguish and shame, as she tried to put them out of her mind for ever,—

'Very well. Now, then, you can marry him! You know you've always wanted to!'

But at last that biting voice was hushed; there was not a sound in the house; the summer night descended gently on the wretched street, and in the midst of anxious discussion with herself as to how she and John were to get Louie to England, she fell asleep.

When Dora awoke, Louie was not in the house. After a few hours of opium-sleep, she must have noiselessly put together all her valuables and money, a few trifles belonging to Cécile, and a small parcel of clothes, and have then slipped out through the

garden door, and into a back lane or track, which would ultimately lead her down to the bank of the river. None of the three other persons sleeping in the house—Dora, the nurse, the old *bonne*, had heard a sound.

When John arrived in the morning, his practical common sense suggested a number of measures for Louie's pursuit, or for the discovery of her fate, should she have made away with herself, as he more than suspected—measures which were immediately taken by himself, or by the lawyer, Mr. O'Kelly.

Everything had so far been in vain. No trace of the fugitive—living or dead—could be found.

David, sitting with his arms on the deal table in the lower room, and his face in his hands, listened in almost absolute silence to the main facts of the story. When he looked up, it was to say, 'Have you been to Father Lenoir?'

No. Neither Dora nor John knew anything of Father Lenoir.

David went off at once. The good priest was deeply touched and overcome by the story, but not astonished. He first told David of the existence of Brénart, and search was instantly made for the artist. He, too, was missing, but the police, whose cordial assistance David, by the help of Lord Driffield's important friends in Paris, was able to secure, were confident of immediate discovery. Day after day passed, however; innumerable false clues were started; but at the end of some weeks Louie's fate was much of a secret as ever.

Dora and John had, of course, gone back to England directly after David's arrival; and he now felt that his child and his work called him. He returned home towards the middle of August, leaving the search for his sister in Mr. O'Kelly's hands.

For five months David remained doggedly at his work in Prince's Street. John watched him silently from day to day, showing him a quiet devotion which sometimes brought his old comrade's hand upon his shoulder in a quick touch of gratitude, or a flash to eyes heavy with broken sleep. The winter was a bad one for trade; the profits made by Grieve & Co., even on much business, were but small; and in the consultative council of employés which David had established the chairman constantly showed a dreaminess or an irritability in difficult circumstances which in earlier days would have cost him influence and success. But the men, who knew him well, looked at each other askance, and either spoke their minds or bore with him as seemed best. They were well aware that while wages everywhere else had been cut down, theirs were undiminished; that the profits from the second-hand book trade which remained nominally outside the profit-sharing partnership were practically all spent in furthering the social ends of it; and that the master, in his desolate house, with his two maid-servants, one of them his boy's nurse, lived as modestly as any of them, yet with help always to spare for the sick and the unfortunate. To a man they remained loyal to the

firm and the scheme; but among even the best of them there was a curious difference of opinion as to David and his ways. They profited by them, and they would see him through; but there was an uncomfortable feeling that, if such ideas were to spread, they might cut both ways and interfere too much with the easy living which the artisan likes and desires as much as any other man.

Meanwhile, those who have followed the history of David Grieve with any sympathy will not find it difficult to believe that this autumn and winter were with him a time of intense mental anguish and depression. The shock and tragedy of Louie's disappearance following on the prolonged nervous exhaustion caused by Lucy's struggle for life had brought him into a state similar to that in which his first young grief had left him; only with this difference, that the nature being now deeper and richer was but the more capable of suffering. The passion of religious faith which had carried him through Lucy's death had dwindled by natural reaction; he believed, but none the less he walked in darkness. The cruelty of his wife's fate, meditated upon through lonely and restless nights, tortured beyond bearing a soul made for pity; and every now and then wild fits of remorse for his original share in Louie's sins and misfortunes would descend upon him, and leave no access to reason.

His boy, his work, and his books, these were ultimately his protections from himself. Sandy climbed about him, or got into mischief with salutary frequency. The child slept beside his father at night, and in the evenings was always either watching for him at the gate or standing thumb in mouth with his face pressed against the window, and his bright eye scanning the dusk.

For the rest, after a first period of utter numbness and languor, David was once more able to read, and he read with voracity—science, philosophy, *belles lettres*. Two subjects, however, held his deepest mind all through, whatever might be added to them—the study of ethics, in their bearing upon religious conceptions, and the study of Christian origins. His thoughts about them found occasional outlet, either in his talks with Ancrum—whose love soothed him, and whose mind, with all its weaknesses and its strong Catholic drift, he had long found to be infinitely freer and more hospitable in the matter of ideas than the average Anglican mind—or in his journal.

A few last extracts from the journal may be given. It should be remembered that the southern element in him made such a mode of expression more easy and natural to him than it ever can be to most Englishmen.

'*November 2nd.*—It seems to me that last night was the first night since she died that I have not dreamt of her. As a rule, I am always with her in sleep, and for that reason I am the more covetous of the sleep which comes to me so hardly. It is a second life. Yet before her illness, during our married life, I hardly knew what it was to dream.

'Two nights ago I thought I was standing beside her. She

was lying on the long couch under the sycamore tree whither we used to carry her. At first, everything was wholly lifelike and familiar. Sandy was somewhere near. She had the grey camel's hair shawl over her shoulders, which I remember so well, and the white frilled cap drawn loosely together under her chin, over bandages and dressings, as usual. She asked me to fetch something for her from the house, and I went, full of joy. There seemed to be a strange mixed sense at the bottom of my heart that I had somehow lost her and found her again.

'When I came back, nurse was there, and everything was changed. Nurse looked at me with meaning, startled eyes, as much as to say, "Look closely, it is not as you think." And as I went up to her, lying still and even smiling on her couch, there was an imperceptible raising of her little white hand as though to keep me off. Then in a flash I saw that it was not my living Lucy; that it could only be her spirit. I felt an awful sense of separation and yet of yearning; sitting down on one of the mossy stones beside her, I wept bitterly, and so woke, bathed in tears.

'. . . It has often seemed to me lately that certain elements in the Resurrection stories may be originally traced to such experiences as these. I am irresistibly drawn to believe that the strange and mystic scene beside the lake, in the appendix chapter to the Gospel of St. John, arose in some such way. There is the same mixture of elements—of the familiar with the ghostly, the trivial with the passionate and exalted—which my own consciousness has so often trembled under in these last visionary months. The well-known lake, the old scene of fishers and fishing-boats, and on the shore the mysterious figure of the Master, the same, yet not the same, the little, vivid, dream like details of the fire of coals, the broiled fish, and bread, the awe and longing of the disciples—it is borne in upon me with extraordinary conviction that the whole of it sprang, to begin with, from the dream of grief and exhaustion. Then, in an age which attached a peculiar and mystical importance to dreams, the beautiful thrilling fancy passed from mouth to mouth, became almost immediately history instead of dream,—just as here and there a parable misunderstood has taken the garb of an event,—was after a while added to and made more precise in the interest of apologetics, or of doctrine, or of the simple love of elaboration, and so at last found a final resting-place as an epilogue to the fourth Gospel.'

'*November 4th.*—To-night I have dared to read again Browning's "Rabbi ben Ezra." For months I have not been able to read it, or think of it, though for days and weeks towards the end of her life it seemed to be graven on my heart.

> Look not thou down, but up!
> To uses of a cup,
> The festal board, lamp's flash, and trumpet's peal,
> The new wine's foaming glow,
> The Master's lips a-glow!
> Thou heaven's consummate cup, what need'st thou with earth's wheel?

'Let me think again, my God, of that astonishing ripening of her last days !—of all her little acts of love and gratitude towards me, towards her nurse, towards the people in the house, who had helped to tend her—of her marvellous submission, when once the black cloud of the fear of death, and the agony of parting from life had left her.

'And such facts alone in the world's economy are to have no meaning, point no-whither ? I could as soon believe it as that, in the physical universe, the powers of the magnet, or the flash of the lightning, are isolated and meaningless—tell us nothing and lead nowhere.'

'*November* 10*th.*—In the old days—there is a passage of the kind in an earlier part of this journal—I was constantly troubled, and not for myself only, but for others, the poor and unlearned especially, who, as it seemed to me, would lose most in the crumbling of the Christian mythology—as to the intellectual difficulties of the approach to God. All this philosophical travail of two thousand years—and so many doubts and darknesses ! A world athirst for preaching, and nothing simple or clear to preach—when once the miracle-child of Bethlehem had been dispossessed. And *now* it is daylight-plain to me that in the simplest act of loving self-surrender there is the germ of all faith, the essence of all lasting religion. Quicken human service, purify and strengthen human love, and have no fear but that the conscience will find its God ! For all the time this quickening and this purification are His work in thee. Around thee are the institutions, the ideals, the knowledge and beliefs, ethical or intellectual, in which that work, that life, have been so far fragmentarily and partially realised. Submit thyself and press forward. Thou knowest well what it means to be *better :* more pure, more loving, more self-denying. And in thy struggle to be all these, God cometh to thee and abides. . . . *But the greatest of these is love !*'

'*November* 20*th.*—To-day I have finished the last of my New Testament tracts, the last at any rate for a time. While Ancrum lives I have resolved to suspend them. They trouble him deeply ; and I, who owe him so much, will not voluntarily add to his burden. His wife is with him, a somewhat heavy, dark-faced woman, with a slumbrous eye, which may, however, be capable of kindling. They have left Mortimer Street, and have gone to live in a little house on the road to Cheadle. He seems perfectly happy, and though the doctor is discouraging, I at least can see no change for the worse. She sits by him and reads or works, without much talking, but is all the time attentive to his lightest movement. Friends send them flowers which brighten the little house, his "boys" visit him in the evenings, he is properly fed, and altogether I am more happy about him than I have been for long. It required considerable courage, this move, on her part ; for there are a certain number of people still left who knew Ancrum at college, and remember the story ; and those who

believed him a bachelor are of course scandalised and wondering. But the talk, whatever it is, does not seem to molest them much. He offered to leave Manchester, but she would not let him. "What would he do away from you and his boys?" she said to me. There is a heroism in it all the same.

'. . . So my New Testament work may rest a while.—During these autumn weeks, it has helped me through some terrible hours.

'When I look back over the mass of patient labour which has accumulated during the present century round the founder of Christianity and the origins of his society—when I compare the text-books of the day with the text-books of sixty years ago—I no longer wonder at the empty and ignorant arrogance with which the French eighteenth century treated the whole subject. The first stone of the modern building had not been laid when Voltaire wrote, unless perhaps in the Wolfenbüttel fragments. He knew, in truth, no more than the Jesuits, much less in fact than the better men among them.

'. . . It has been like the unravelling of a piece of fine and ancient needlework—and so discovering the secrets of its make and craftsmanship. A few loose ends were first followed up; then gradually the whole tissue has been involved, till at last the nature and quality of each thread, the purpose and the skill of each stitch, are becoming plain, and what was mystery rises into knowledge.

'. . . But how close and fine a web!—and how difficult and patient the process by which Christian *reality* has to be grasped! There is no short cut—one must toil.

'But after one has toiled, what are the rewards? Truth first—which is an end in itself and not a means to anything beyond. Then—the great figure of Christianity given back to you—with something at least of the first magic, the first "natural truth" of look and tone. Through and beyond dogmatic overlay, and Messianic theory and wonder-loving addition, to recover, at least fragmentarily, the actual voice, the first meaning, which is also the eternal meaning, of Jesus—Paul—"John"!

'Finally—a conception of Christianity in which you discern once more its lasting validity and significance—its imperishable place in human life. It becomes simply that preaching of the Kingdom of God which belongs to and affects you—you, the modern European—just as Greek philosophy, Stoic or Cynic, was that preaching of it which belonged to and affected Epictetus.'

'*November* 24*th*.—Mr. O'Kelly writes to me to-day his usual hopeless report. No news! I do not even know whether she is alive, and I can do nothing—absolutely nothing.

'Yes—let me correct myself, there is *some* news—of an event which, if we could find her, might simplify matters a little. Montjoie is dead in hospital—at the age of thirty-six—

'Is there *any* other slavery and chain like that of tempera

ment? As I look back on the whole course of my relation to Louie, I am conscious only of a sickening sense of utter failure. Our father left her to me, and I have not been able to hold her back from—nay, I have helped to plunge her into the most obvious and commonplace ruin. Yet I am always asking myself, if it were to do again, could I do any better? Has any other force developed in me which would make it possible for me *now* to break through the barriers between her nature and mine, to love her sincerely, asking for nothing again, to help her to a saner and happier life?

'If sometimes I dream that so it is, it is to *her* I owe it—to *her* whom I carry on my bosom, and whose hand did once, or so it seemed, unlock to me the gates of God. *Lucy! my Lucy!*

'. . . All my past life becomes sometimes intolerable to me. I can see nothing in it that is not tarnished and flecked with black stains of egotism, pride, hardness, moral indolence.

'And the only reparation possible, "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds," at which my fainting heart sinks.

'Sometimes I find much comfort in the saying of a lonely thinker, "Let us humbly accept from God even our own nature; not that we are called upon to accept the evil and the disease in us, but let us accept *ourselves* in spite of the evil and the disease."

'*Que vivre est difficile—ô mon cœur fatigué!*'

CHAPTER XI

By the end of December David Grieve was near breaking down. Dr. Mildmay insisted brusquely on his going away.

'As far as I can see you will live to be an old man,' he said, 'but if you go on like this, it will be with shattered powers. You are driving yourself to death, yet at the present moment you have no natural driving force. It is all artificial, a matter of will. Do, for heaven's sake, get away from these skies and these streets, and leave all work and all social reforms behind. The first business of the citizen—prate as you like!—is to keep his nerves and his digestion in going order.'

David laughed and yielded. The advice, in fact, corresponded to an inward thirst, and had, moreover, a coincidence to back it. In one of the Manchester papers two or three mornings before he had seen the advertisement of a farm to let, which had set vibrating all his passion for and memory of the moorland. It was a farm about half a mile from Needham Farm, on one of the lower slopes of Kinder Low. It had belonged to a peasant owner, lately dead. The heirs wished to sell, but failing a purchaser were willing to let on a short lease.

It was but a small grazing farm, and the rent was low. David went to the agent, took it at once, and in a few days, to the amazement of Reuben and Hannah, to whom he wrote only the night before he arrived, he and Sandy, and a servant, were estab-

lished with a minimum of furniture, but a sufficiency of blankets and coals, in two or three rooms of the little grey-walled house.

'Well, it caps me, it do!' Hannah said to herself, in her astonishment as she stood on her own doorstep the day after the arrival, and watched the figures of David and Sandy disappearing along the light crisp snow of the nearer fields in the direction of the Red Brook and the sheep-fold. They had looked in to ask for Reuben, and had gone in pursuit of him.

What on earth should make a man in the possession of his natural senses leave a warm town-house in January, and come to camp in 'owd Ben's' farm, was, indeed, past Hannah's divination. In reality, no sudden resolve could have been happier. Sandy was a hardy little fellow, and with the first breath of the moorland wind David felt a load, which had been growing too heavy to bear, lifting from his breast. His youth, his manhood, reasserted themselves. The bracing clearness of what seemed to be the setting-in of a long frost put a new life into him; winter's 'bright and intricate device' of ice-fringed stream, of rimy grass, of snow-clad moor, of steel-blue skies, filled him once more with natural joy, carried him out of himself. He could not keep himself indoors; he went about with Reuben or the shepherd, after the sheep; he fed the cattle at Needham Farm, and brought his old knowledge to bear on the rearing of a sickly calf; he watched for the grouse, or he carried his pockets full of bread for the few blackbirds or moor-pippits that cheered his walks into the fissured solitudes of the great Peak plateau, walks which no one to whom every inch of the ground was not familiar dared have ventured, seeing how misleading and treacherous even light snow-drifts may become in the black bog-land of these high and lonely moors; or he toiled up the side of the Scout with Sandy on his back, that he might put the boy on one of the boulders beside the top of the Downfall, and, holding him fast, bid him look down at the great icicles which marked its steep and waterless bed, gleaming in the short-lived sun.

The moral surroundings, too, of the change were cheering. There, over the brow, in the comfortable little cottage, where he had long since placed her, with a woman to look after her, was Margaret—quite childish and out of her mind, but happy and well cared for. He and Sandy would trudge over from time to time to see her, he carrying the boy in a plaid slung round his shoulders when the snow was deep. Once Sandy went to Frimley with the Needham Farm shepherd, and when David came to fetch him he found the boy and Margaret playing cat's-cradle together by the fire, and the eagerness in Sandy's pursed lips, and on the ethereally blanched and shrunken face of Margaret, brought the tears to David's eyes, as he stood smiling and looking on. But she did not suffer; for memory was gone; only the gentle 'imperishable child' remained.

And at Needham Farm he had never known the atmosphere so still. Reuben was singularly cheerful and placid. Whether

by the mere physical weakening of years, or by some slow softening of the soul, Hannah and her ways were no longer the daily scourge and perplexity to her husband they had once been. She was a harsh and tyrannous woman still, but not now openly viperish or cruel. With the disappearance of old temptations, the character had, to some extent, righted itself. Her sins of avarice and oppression towards Sandy's orphans had raised no Nemesis that could be traced, either within or without. It is doubtful whether she ever knew what self-reproach might mean; in word, at any rate, she was to the end as loudly confident as at the first. Nevertheless it might certainly be said that at sixty she was a better and more tolerable human being than she had been at fifty.

'Aye, if yo do but live long enoof, yo get past t' bad bits o' t' road,' Reuben said one night, with a long breath, to David, and then checked himself, brought up either by a look at his nephew's mourning dress, or by a recollection of what David had told him of Louie the night before.

It troubled Reuben indeed, something in the old fashion, that his wife would show no concern whatever for Louie when he repeated to her the details of that disappearance whereof so far he and she had known only the bare fact.

'Aye, I thowt she 'd bin and married soom mak o' rabblement,' remarked Hannah. 'Yo doant suppose ony decent mon ud put up wi her. What Davy wants wi lookin for her I doant know. He'll be hard-set when he's fand her, I should think.'

She was equally impervious and sarcastic with regard to David's social efforts. Her sharp tongue exercised itself on the 'poor way' in which he seemed to live, and when Reuben repeated to her, with some bewilderment, the facts which she had egged him on to get out of David, her scorn knew no bounds.

'Weel, it's like t' Bible after aw, Hannah,' said Reuben, perplexed and remonstrating; 'theer 's things, yo'll remember, abeawt gien t' coat off your back, an sellin aw a mon has, an th' loike, 'at fairly beats me soomtimes.'

'Oh—go long wi yo!' said Hannah in high wrath. 'He an his loike 'll mak a halliblash of us aw soon, wi their silly faddle, an pamperin o' workin men, wha never wor an never will be noa better nor they should be. But—thank the Lord—*I*'ll not be theer to see.'

And after this communication she found it very difficult to treat David civilly.

But to David's son—to Sandy—Hannah Grieve capitulated, for the first and only time in her life.

On the second and third day after his arrival, Sandy came over with the servant to ask Hannah's help in some small matter of the new household. As they neared the farm door, Tim, the aged Tim, who was slouching behind, was suddenly set upon by a new and ill-tempered collie of Reuben's, who threatened very soon to shake the life out of his poor toothless victim. But

Sandy, who had a stick, rushed at him, his cheeks and eyes glowing with passion.

'Get away! you great big dog, you! and leave my middle-sized dog alone!'

And he belaboured and pulled at the collie, without a thought of fear, till the farm-man and Hannah came and separated the combatants,—stalking into the farm kitchen afterwards in a speechless rage at the cowardly injustice which had been done to Tim. As he sat in the big rocking-chair, fiercely cuddling Tim and sucking his thumb, his stormy breath subsiding by degrees, Hannah thought him, as she confessed to the only female friend she possessed in the world, 'the pluckiest and bonniest little grig i' th' coontry side.'

Thenceforward, so far as her queer temper would allow, she became his nurse and slave, and David, with all the memorials of his own hard childhood about him, could not believe his eyes, when he found Sandy established day after day in the Needham Farm kitchen, sucking his thumb in a corner of the settle, and ordering Hannah about with the airs of a three-tailed bashaw. She stuffed him with hot girdle-cakes; she provided for him a store of 'humbugs,' the indigenous sweet of the district, which she made and baked with her own hands, and had not made before for forty years; she took him about with her, 'rootin,' as she expressed it, after the hens and pigs and the calves; till, Sandy's exactions growing with her compliance, the common fate of tyrants overtook him. He one day asked too much and his slave rebelled. David saw him come in one afternoon, and found him a minute or two after viciously biting the blind-cord in the parlour, in a black temper. When his father inquired what was the matter, Sandy broke out in a sudden wail of tears.

'Why *can't* she be a Kangawoo when I want her to?'

Whereupon David, with the picture of Hannah's grim figure, cap and all, before his mind's eye, went into the first fit of side-shaking laughter that had befallen him for many and many a month.

On a certain gusty afternoon towards the middle of February, David was standing alone beside the old smithy. The frost, after a temporary thaw, had set in again, there had been tolerably heavy snow the night before, and it was evident from the shifting of the wind and the look of the clouds that were coming up from the north-east over the Scout that another fall was impending. But the day had been fine, and the sun, setting over the Cheshire hills, threw a flood of pale rose into the white bosom of the Scout and on the heavy clouds piling themselves above it. It was a moment of exquisite beauty and wildness. The sunlit snow gleamed against the stormy sky; the icicles lining the steep channel of the Downfall shone jagged and rough between the white and smoothly rounded banks of moor, or the snow-wreathed shapes of the grit boulders; to his left was the murmur of the

Red Brook creeping between its frozen banks ; while close beside him about twenty of the moor sheep were huddling against the southern wall of the smithy in prescience of the coming storm. Almost within reach of his stick was the pan of his childish joy, the water left in it by the December rains frozen hard and white; and in the crevice of the wall he had just discovered the mouldering remains of a toy-boat.

He stood and looked out over the wide winter world, rejoicing in its austerity, its solemn beauty. Physically he was conscious of recovered health ; and in the mind also there was a new energy of life and work. Nature seemed to say to him, 'Do but keep thy heart open to me, and I have a myriad aspects and moods wherewith to interest and gladden and teach thee to the end ;' while, as his eye wandered to the point where Manchester lay hidden on the horizon, the world of men, of knowledge, of duty, summoned him back to it with much of the old magic and power in the call. His grief, his love, no man should take from him ; but he must play his part.

Yes—he and Sandy must go home—and soon. Yet even as he so decided, the love of the familiar scene, its freedom, its loneliness, its unstainedness, rose high within him. He stood lost in a trance of memory. Here he and Louie had listened to 'Lias ; there, far away amid the boulders of the Downfall, they had waited for the witch ; among those snow-laden bushes yonder Louie had hidden when she played Jenny Crum for the discomfiture of the prayer-meeting ; and it was on the slope at his feet that she had pushed the butter-scotch into his mouth, the one and only sign of affection she had ever given him, that he could remember, in all their forlorn childhood.

As these things rose before him, the moor, the wind, the rising voice of the storm became to him so many channels, whereby the bitter memory of his sister rushed upon him and took possession. Everything spoke of her, suggested her. Then with inexorable force his visualising gift carried him on past her childhood to the scenes of her miserable marriage ; and as he thought of her child's death, the desolation and madness of her flight, the mystery of her fate, his soul was flooded once more for the hundredth time with anguish and horror. Here in this place, where their childish lives had been so closely intertwined, he could not resign himself for ever to ignorance, to silence ; his whole being went out in protest, in passionate remorseful desire.

The wind was beginning to blow fiercely ; the rosy glow was gone ; darkness was already falling. Wild gusts swept from time to time round the white amphitheatre of moor and crag ; the ghostly sounds of night and storm were on the hills. Suddenly it was to him as though he heard his name called from a great distance—breathed shrilly and lingeringly along the face of the Scout.

'*David!*'

It was Louie's voice. The illusion was so strong that, as he

raised his hand to his ear, turning towards the Downfall, whence the sound seemed to come, he trembled from head to foot.

'*David!*'

Was it the call of some distant boy or shepherd? He could not tell, could not collect himself. He sank down on one of the grit-boulders by the snow-wreathed door of the smithy and sat there long, heedless of the storm and cold, his mind working, a sudden purpose rising and unfolding, with a mysterious rapidity and excitement.

Early on the following morning he made his way down through the deep snow to the station, having first asked Hannah to take charge of Sandy for a day or two; and by the night mail he left London for Paris.

It was not till he walked into Mr. O'Kelly's office, on the ground floor of a house in the Rue d'Assas, at about eleven o'clock on the next day, that he was conscious of any reaction. Then for a bewildered instant he wondered why he had come, and what he was to say.

But to his amazement the lawyer rose at once, throwing up his hands with the gesture of one who notes some singular and unexpected stroke of good fortune.

'This is *most* extraordinary, Mr. Grieve! I have not yet signed the letter on my desk—there it is!—summoning you to Paris. We have discovered Madame Montjoie! As constantly happens, we have been pursuing inquiries in all sorts of difficult and remote quarters, and she is here—at our doors, living for some weeks past, at any rate, without any disguise, at *Barbizon*, of all places in the world! Barbizon *près* Fontainebleau. You know it?'

David sat down.

'Yes,' he said, after an instant. 'I know it. Is he—is that man Brénart there?'

'Certainly. He has taken a miserable studio, and is making, or pretending to make, some winter studies of the forest. I hear that Madame Montjoie looks ill and worn; the neighbours say the *ménage* is a very uncomfortable one, and not likely to last long. I wish I had better news for you, Mr. Grieve.'

And the lawyer, remembering the handsome hollow-eyed boy of twenty who had first asked his help, studied with irrepressible curiosity the man's noble storm-beaten look and fast grizzling hair, as David sat before him with his head bent and his hat in his hands.

They talked a while longer, and then David said, rising:

'Can I get over there to-night? The snow will be deep in the forest.'

'I imagine they will keep that main road to Barbizon open in some fashion,' said the lawyer. 'You may find a sledge. Let me know how you speed and whether I can assist you. But, I fear,'—he shrugged his shoulders—'in the end this wild life *gets into the blood*. I have seen it so often.'

He spoke with the freedom and knowledge of one who had observed Louie Montjoie with some closeness for eleven years. David said nothing in answer; but at the door he turned to ask a question.

'You can't tell me anything of the habits of this man—this Brénart?'

'Stop!' said the lawyer, after a moment's thought; 'I remember this detail—my agent told me that M. Brénart was engaged in some work for 'D—— et Cie'—he named a great picture-dealing firm on the Boulevard St. Germain, famous for their illustrated books and *éditions de luxe.*—'He did not hear what it was, but—ah! I remember,—it has taken him occasionally to Paris, or so he says, and it has been these absences which have led to some of the worst scenes between him and your sister. I suppose she put a jealous woman's interpretation on them. You want to see her alone?—when this man is out of the way? I have an idea: take my card and your own to this person—' he wrote out an address—'he is one of the junior partners in "D—— et Cie;" I know him, and I got his firm the sale of a famous picture. He will do me a good turn. Ask him what the work is that M. Brénart is doing, and when he expects him next in Paris. It is possible you may get some useful information.'

David took the card and walked at once to the Boulevard St. Germain, which was close by. He was civilly received by the man to whom O'Kelly had sent him, and learned from him that Brénart was doing for the firm a series of etchings illustrating the forest in winter, and intended to make part of a great book on Fontainebleau and the Barbizon school. They were expecting the last batch from him, were indeed desperately impatient for them. But he was a difficult fellow to deal with—an exceedingly clever artist, but totally untrustworthy. In his last letter to them he had spoken of bringing the final instalment to them, and returning some corrected proofs by February 16—'to-morrow, I see,' said the speaker, glancing at an almanac on his office table. 'Well, we may get them, and we mayn't. If we don't, we shall have to take strong measures. And now, Monsieur, I think I have told you all I can tell you of our relations to M. Brénart.'

David bowed and took his leave. He made his way through the great shop with its picture-covered walls and its floors dotted with stands on which lay exposed the new etchings and engravings of the season. In front of him a lady in black was also making her way to the door and the street. No one was attending her, and instinctively he hurried forward to open the heavy glass door for her. As he did so a sudden sharp presentiment shot through him. The door swung to behind them, and he found himself in the covered entrance of the shop face to face with Elise Delaunay.

The meeting was so startling that neither could disguise the shock of it. He took off his hat mechanically; she grew white and leant against the glass window.

'You !—how can it be you ?' she said in a quick whisper, then recovering herself—'Monsieur Grieve, old associations are painful, and I am neither strong—nor—nor stoical. Which way are you walking ?'

'Towards the Rue de Seine,' he said, thrown into a bewildering mist of memory by her gesture, the crisp agitated decision of her manner. 'And you ?'

'I also. We will walk a hundred yards together. What are you in Paris for ?'

'I am here on some business of my sister's,' he said evasively.

She raised her eyes, and looked at him long and sharply. He, on his side, saw, with painful agitation, that her youth was gone, but not her grace, not her singular and wilful charm. The little face under her black hat was lined and sallow, and she was startlingly thin. The mouth had lost its colour, and gained instead the hard shrewdness of a woman left to battle with the world and poverty alone; but the eyes had their old plaintive trick; the dead gold of the hair, the rings and curls of it against the white temples, were still as beautiful as they had ever been; and the light form moved beside him with the same quick floating gait.

'You have grown much older,' she said abruptly. 'You look as if you had suffered—but what of that ?—*C'est comme tout le monde.*'

She withdrew her look a moment, with a little bitter gesture, then she resumed, drawn on by a curiosity and emotion she could not control.

'Are you married ?'

'Yes, but my wife is dead.'

She gave a start; the first part of the answer had not prepared her for the second.

'*Ah, mon Dieu !*' she said, 'always grief—*always !* Is it long ?'

'Eight months. I have a boy. And you ?—I heard sad news of you once—the only time.'

'You might well,' she said, with a half-ironical accent, driving the point of her umbrella restlessly into the crevices of the stones, as they slowly crossed a paved street. 'My husband is only a cripple, confined to his chair,—I am no longer an artist but an artisan,—I have not painted a *picture* for years,—but what I paint sells for a trifle, and there is soup in the pot—of a sort. For the rest I spend my life in making *tisane*, in lifting weights too heavy for me, and bargaining for things to eat.'

'But—you are not unhappy !' he said to her boldly, with a change of tone.

She stopped, struck by the indescribable note in his voice. They had turned into a side street, whither she had unconsciously led him. She stood with her eyes on the ground, then she lifted them once more, and there was in them a faint beautiful gleam, which transformed the withered and sharpened face.

'You are quite right,' she said, 'if he will only live. He depends on me for everything. It is like a child, but it consoles. Adieu!'

That night David found himself in the little *auberge* at Barbizon. He had discovered a sledge to take him across the forest, and he and his driver had pushed their way under a sky of lead and through whirling clouds of fresh sleet past the central beechwood, where the great boles stood straight and bare amid fantastic masses of drift; through the rock and fir region, where all was white, and the trees drooped under their wintry load; and beneath withered and leaning oaks, throwing gaunt limbs here and there from out the softening effacing mantle of the snow. Night fell when the journey was half over, and as the lights of the sledge flashed from side to side into these lonely fastnesses of cold, how was it possible to believe that summer and joy had ever tabernacled here?

He was received at the inn, as his driver had brought him—with astonishment. But Barbizon has been long accustomed, beyond most places in France, to the eccentricities of the English and American visitor; and being a home of artists, it understands the hunt for 'impressions,' and easily puts up with the unexpected. Before a couple of hours were over, David was installed in a freezing room, and was being discussed in the kitchen, where his arrival produced a certain animation, as the usual English madman in quest of a sensation, and no doubt ready to pay for it.

There were, however, three other guests in the inn, as he found, when he descended for dinner. They were all artists—young, noisy, *bons camarades*, and of a rough and humble social type. To them the winter at Barbizon was as attractive as anywhere else. Life at the inn was cheap, and free; they had the digestion of ostriches, eating anything that was put before them, and drinking oceans of red wine at ten sous a litre; on bad days they smoked, fed, worked at their pictures or played coarse practical jokes on each other and the people of the inn; in fine weather there was always the forest to be exploited, and the chance of some happy and profitable inspiration.

They stared at David a good deal during the *biftek*, the black pudding which seemed to be a staple dish of the establishment, and the *omelette aux fines herbes*, which the landlord's wife had added in honour of the stranger. One of them, behind the shelter of his glasses, drew the outline of the Englishman's head and face on the table-cloth, and showed it to his neighbour.

'Poetical, grand style, *hein?*'

The other nodded carelessly. '*Pourtant—l'hiver lui plaît*,' he hummed under his breath, having some lines of Hugo's, which he had chosen as a motto for a picture, running in his head.

After dinner everybody gathered round the great fire, which the servant had piled with logs, while the flames, and the wreaths of smoke from the four pipes alternately revealed and concealed

the rough sketches of all sorts—landscape, portrait, *genre*—legacies of bygone visitors, wherewith the walls of the *salle à manger* were covered. David sat in his corner smoking, ready enough to give an account of his journey across the forest, and to speak when he was spoken to.

As soon as the strangeness of the new-comer had a little worn off, the three young fellows plunged into a flood of amusing gossip about the storm and the blocking of the roads, the scarcity of food in Barbizon, the place in general, and its inhabitants. David fell silent after a while, stiffening under a presentiment which was soon realised. He heard his sister's wretched lot discussed with shouts of laughter—the chances of Brénart's escape from the mistress he had already wearied of and deceived—the perils of 'la Montjoie's' jealousy. '*Il veut bien se débarrasser d'elle—mais on ne plaisante pas avec une tigresse!*' said one of the speakers. So long as there was information to be got which might serve him he sat motionless, withdrawn into the dark, forcing himself to listen. When the talk became mere scurrility and noise, he rose and went out.

He passed through the courtyard of the inn, and turned down the village street. The storm had gone down, and there were a few stars amid the breaking clouds. Here and there a light shone from the low houses on either hand; the snow, roughly shovelled from the foot pavements, lay piled in heaps along the roadway, the white roofs shone dimly against the wild sky. He passed Madame Pyat's *maisonnette*, pausing a moment to look over the wall. Not a sign of life in the dark building, and, between him and it, great drifts of snow choking up and burying the garden. A little further on, as he knew, lay the goal of his quest. He easily made out the house from Mr. O'Kelly's descriptions, and he lingered a minute, on the footway, under an overhanging roof to look at it. It was just a labourer's cottage standing back a little from the street, and to one side rose a high wooden addition which he guessed to be the studio. Through the torn blind came the light of a lamp, and as he stood there, himself invisible in his patch of darkness, he heard voices—an altercation, a woman's high shrill note.

Then he crept back to the inn vibrating through all his being to the shame of those young fellows' talk, the incredible difficulty of the whole enterprise. Could he possibly make any impression upon her whatever? What was done was done; and it would be a crime on his part to jeopardise in the smallest degree the wholesome brightness of Sandy's childhood by any rash proposals which it might be wholly beyond his power to carry out.

He carried up a basket of logs to his room, made them blaze, and crouched over them till far into the night. But in the end the doubt and trouble of his mind subsided; his purpose grew clear again. 'It was my own voice that spoke to me on the moor,' he thought, 'the voice of my own best life.'

About eight o'clock, with the first light of the morning, he was

roused by bustle and noise under his window. He got up, and, looking out, saw two sledges standing before the inn, in the cold grey light. Men were busy harnessing a couple of horses to each, and there were a few figures, muffled in great coats and carrying bags and wraps, standing about.

'They are going over to Fontainebleau station,' he thought; 'if that man keeps his appointment in Paris to-day, he will go with them.'

As the words passed through his mind, a figure came striding up from the lower end of the street, a young fair-haired man, in a heavy coat lined with sheepskin. His delicately made face—naturally merry and *bon enfant*—was flushed and scowling. He climbed into one of the sledges, complained of the lateness of the start, swore at the ostler, who made him take another seat on the plea that the one he had chosen was engaged, and finally subsided into a moody silence, pulling at his moustache, and staring out over the snow, till at last the signal was given, and the sledges flew off on the Fontainebleau road, under a shower of snowballs which a group of shivering bright-eyed urchins on their way to school threw after them, as soon as the great whips were at a safe distance.

David dressed and descended.

'Who was that fair-haired gentleman in the first sledge?' he casually asked of the landlord who was bringing some smoking hot coffee into the *salle à manger*.

'That was a M. Brénart, monsieur,' said the landlord, cheerfully, absorbed all the while in the laying of his table. '*C'est un drôle de corps, M. Brénart.* I don't take to him much myself; and as for madame—*qui n'est pas madame!*'

He shrugged his shoulders, saw that there were no fresh rolls, and departed with concern to fetch them.

David ate and drank. He would give her an hour yet.

When his watch told him that the time was come, he went out slowly, inquiring on the way if there would be any means of getting to Paris later in the day. Yes, the landlord thought a conveyance of some sort could be managed—if monsieur would pay for it!

A few minutes later David knocked at the door of Brénart's house. He could get no answer at all, and at last he tried the latch. It yielded to his hand, and he went in.

There was no one in the bare kitchen, but there were the remains of a fire, and of a meal. Both the crockery on the table and a few rough chairs and stools the room contained struck him as being in great disorder. There were two doors at the back. One led into a back room which was empty, the other down a few steps into a garden. He descended the steps and saw the long wooden erection of the studio stretching to his left. There was a door in the centre of its principal wall, which was ajar. He went up to it and softly pushed it open. There, at the further end,

huddled over an iron stove, her face buried in her hands, her shoulders shaken with fierce sobs, was Louie.

He closed the door behind him, and at the sound she turned, hastily. When she saw who it was she gave a cry, and, sinking back on her low canvas chair, she lay staring at him, and speechless. Her eyes were red with weeping; her beauty was a wreck; and in face of the despair which breathed from her, and from her miserable surroundings, all doubt, all repulsion, all condemnation fled from the brother's heart. The iron in his soul melted. He ran up to her, and, kneeling beside her, he put his arms round her, as he had never done in his life.

'Oh you poor thing—you poor thing!' he cried, scarcely knowing what he said. He took her worn, tear-stained face, and, laying it on his shoulder, he kissed her, breathing incoherent words of pity and consolation.

She submitted a while, helpless with shock and amazement, and still shaken with the tempest of her own passion. But there came a moment when she pushed him away and tried desperately to recover herself.

'I don't know what you want—you're not going to have anything to do with me now—you can't. Let me alone—it will be over soon—one way or the other.'

And she sat upright, one hand clenched on her knees, her frowning brows drawn together, and the tears falling in spite of her intense effort to drive them back.

He found a painter's stool, and sat down by her, pale and determined. He told her the history of his search; he implored her to be guided by him, to let him take her home to England and Manchester, where her story was unknown, save to Dora and John. He would make a home for her near his own; he would try to comfort her for the loss of her child; they would understand each other better, and the past should be buried.

Louie looked at him askance. Every now and then she ceased to listen to him at all; while, under the kindling of her own thoughts, her wild eyes flamed into fresh rage and agony.

'Don't!—leave me alone!' she broke out at last, springing up. 'I don't want your help, I don't want you; I only want *him*,—and I will have him, or we shall kill each other.'

She paced to and fro, her hands clasped on her breast, her white face setting into a ghastly calm. David gazed at her with horror. This was another note! one which in all their experience of each other he had never heard on her lips before. *She loved this man!*—this mean wretch, who had lived upon her and betrayed her, and, having got from her all she had to give, was probably just about to cast her off into the abyss which yawns for such women as Louie. He had thought of her flight to him before as the frenzy of a nature which must have distraction at any cost from the unfamiliar and intolerable weight of natural grief.

But this!—one moment it cut the roots from hope, the next it nerved him to more vigorous action.

'You cannot have him,' he said, steadily and sternly. 'I have listened to the talk here for your sake—he is already on the point of deserting you—everyone else in this place knows that he is tired of you—that he is unfaithful to you.'

She dropped into her chair with a groan. Even her energies were spent—she was all but fainting—and her miserable heart knew, with more certainty than David himself did, that all he said was true.

Her unexpected weakness, the collapse of her strained nerves, filled him with fresh hopes. He came close to her again and pleaded, by the memory of her child, of their father—that she would yield, and go away with him at once.

'What should I do'—she broke in passionately, her sense of opposition of absurdity reviving her, 'when I get to your hateful Manchester? Go to church and say my prayers! And you? In a week or two, I tell you, you would be sick of having soiled your hands with such *mud* as I am.'

She threw herself back in her chair with a superb gesture, and folded her arms, looking him defiance.

'Try me,' he said quietly, while his lip trembled. 'I am not as I was, Louie. There are things one can only learn by going down—down—into the depths—of sorrow. The night before Lucy died—she could hardly speak—she sent you a message: "I wish I had been kinder—ask her to come to Manchester when I am gone." I have not seen her die—not seen her whole life turn to love—through such unspeakable suffering—for nothing. Oh Louie—when we submit ourselves to God—when we ask for His life—and give up our own—then, and then only, there is peace—and strength. We ourselves are nothing—creatures of passion—miserable—weak—but in Him and through Him—'

His voice broke. He took her cold hand and pressed it tenderly. She trembled in spite of herself, and closed her eyes.

'*Don't*—I know all about that—why did the child die? There is no God—nothing. It's just talk. I told Him what I'd do—I vowed I'd go to the bad, for good and all—and I have. There—let me alone!'

But he only held her hand tighter.

'No!—never! Your trouble was awful—it might well drive you mad. But others have suffered, Louie—no less—and yet have believed—have hoped. It is not beyond our power—for it has been done again and again!—by the most weak, the most miserable. Oh! think of that—tear yourself first from the evil life—and you, too, will know what it is to be consoled—to be strengthened. The mere effort to come with me—I promise it you!—will bring you healing and comfort. We make for ourselves the promise of eternal life, by turning to the good. Then the hope of recovering our dear ones—which was nothing to us before—rises and roots itself in our heart. Come with me,—conquer yourself,—let us begin to love each other truly, give me comfort and yourself—and you will bear to think again of

Cécile and of God—there will be calm and peace beyond this pain.'

His eyes shone upon her through a mist. She said no more for a while. She lay exhausted and silent, the tears streaming once more down her haggard cheeks.

Then, thinking she had consented, he began to speak of arrangements for the journey—of the possibility of getting across the forest.

Instantly her passion returned. She sprang up and put him away from her.

'It is ridiculous, I tell you—*ridiculous!* How can I decide in such an instant? You must go away and leave me to think.'

'No,' he said firmly, 'my only chance is to stay with you.'

She walked up and down, saying wild incoherent things to herself under her breath. She wore the red dress she had worn at Manchester—now a torn and shabby rag—and over it, because of the cold, a long black cloak, a relic of better days. Her splendid hair, uncombed and dishevelled, hung almost loose round her head and neck; and the emaciation of face and figure made her height and slenderness more abnormal than ever as she swept tempestuously to and fro.

At last she paused in front of him.

'Well, I dare say I'll go with you,' she said, with the old reckless note. 'That fiend thinks he has me in his power for good, he amuses himself with threats of leaving *me*—perhaps I'll turn the tables. . . . But you must go—go for an hour. You can find out about a carriage. There will be an old woman here presently for the house-work. I'll get her to help me pack. You'll only be in the way.'

'You'll be ready for me in an hour?' he said, rising reluctantly.

'Well, it don't look, does it, as if there was much to pack in this hole!' she said with one of her wild laughs.

He looked round for the first time and saw a long bare studio, containing a table covered with etcher's apparatus and some blocks for wood engraving. There was besides an easel, and a picture upon it, with a pretentious historical subject just blocked in, a tall oak chair and stool of antique pattern, and in one corner a stand of miscellaneous arms such as many artists affect—an old flintlock gun or two, some Moorish or Spanish rapiers and daggers. The north window was half blocked by snow, and the atmosphere of the place, in spite of the stove, was freezing.

He moved to the door, loth, most loth, to go, yet well aware, by long experience, of the danger of crossing her temper or her whims. After all, it would take him some time to make his arrangements with the landlord, and he would be back to the moment.

She watched him intently with her poor red eyes. She herself opened the door for him, and to his amazement put a sudden

hand on his arm, and kissed him—roughly, vehemently, with lips that burnt.

'Oh, you fool!' she said, 'you fool!'

'What do you mean?' he said, stopping. 'I believe I *am* a fool, Louie, to leave you for a moment.'

'Nonsense! You are a fool to want to take me to Manchester, and I am a fool to think of going. There :—if I had never been born!—oh! go, for God's sake, go! and come back in an hour. I *must* have some time, I tell you—' and she gave a passionate stamp—'to think a bit, and put my things together.'

She pushed him out, and shut the door. With a great effort he mastered himself and went.

He made all arrangements for the two-horse sledge that was to take them to Fontainebleau. He called for his bill, and paid it. Then he hung about the entrance to the forest, looking with an unseeing eye at the tricks which the snow had been playing with the trees, at the gleams which a pale and struggling sun was shedding over the white world—till his watch told him it was time.

He walked briskly back to the cottage, opened the outer door, was astonished to hear neither voice nor movement, to see nothing of the charwoman Louie had spoken of—rushed to the studio and entered.

She sat in the tall chair, her hands dropping over the arms, her head hanging forward. The cold snow-light shone on her open and glazing eyes—on the red and black of her dress, on the life-stream dripping among the folds, on the sharp curved Algerian dagger at her feet. She was quite dead. Even in the midst of his words of hope, the thought of self-destruction—of her mother—had come upon her and absorbed her. That capacity for sudden intolerable despair which she had inherited, rose to its full height when she had driven David from her—guided her mad steps, her unshrinking hand.

He knelt by her—called for help, laid his ear to her heart, her lips. Then the awfulness of the shock, and of his self-reproach, the crumbling of all his hopes, became too much to bear. Consciousness left him, and when the woman of whom Louie had spoken did actually come in, a few minutes later, she found the brother lying against the sister's knee, his arms outstretched across her, while the dead Louie, with fixed and frowning brows, sat staring beyond him into eternity—a figure of wild fate—freed at last and for ever from that fierce burden of herself.

EPILOGUE

Alas!—Alas!

—But to part from David Grieve under the impression of this scene of wreck and moral defeat would be to misread and misjudge a life, destined, notwithstanding the stress of exceptional suffering it was called upon at one time to pass through, to singularly rich and fruitful issues. Time, kind inevitable Time, dulled the paralysing horror of his sister's death, and softened the memory of all that long torture of publicity, legal investigation, and the like, which had followed it. The natural healing 'in widest commonalty spread,' which flows from affection, nature, and the direction of the mind to high and liberating aims, came to him also as the months and years passed. His wife's death, his sister's tragedy, left indeed indelible marks; but, though scarred and changed, he was in the end neither crippled nor unhappy. The moral experience of life had built up in him a faith which endured, and the pangs of his own pity did but bring him at last to rest the more surely on a pity beyond man's. During the nights of semi-delirium which followed the scene at Barbizon, John, who watched him, heard him repeat again and again words which seemed to have a talismanic power over his restlessness. 'Neither do I condemn thee. *Come*, and sin no more.' They were fragments dropped from what was clearly a nightmare of anguish and struggle; but they testified to a *set* of character, they threw light on the hopes and convictions which ultimately repossessed themselves of the sound man.

Two years passed. It was Christmas Eve. The firm of Grieve & Co. in Prince's Street was shut for the holiday, and David Grieve, a mile or two away, was sitting over his study fire with a book. He closed it presently, and sat thinking.

There was a knock at his door. When he opened it he found Dora outside. It was Dora, in the quasi-sister's garb she had assumed of late—serge skirt, long black cloak, and bonnet tied with white muslin strings under the throat. In her parish visiting among the worst slums of Ancoats, she had found such a dress useful.

'I brought Sandy's present,' she said, looking round her cautiously. 'Is his stocking hung up?'

'No! or the rascal would never go to sleep to-night. He is nearly wild about his presents as it is. Give it to me. It shall go into my drawer, and I will arrange everything when I go to bed to-night.'

He looked at the puzzle-map she had brought with a childish

pleasure, and between them they locked it away carefully in a drawer of the writing-table.

'Do sit down and get warm,' he said to her, pushing forward a chair.

'Oh no! I must go back to the church. We shall be decorating till late to-night. But I had to be in Broughton, so I brought this on my way home.'

Then Sandy and I will escort you, if you will have us. He made me promise to take him to see the shops. I suppose Market Street is a sight.'

He went outside to shout to Sandy, who was having his tea, to get ready, and then came back to Dora. She was standing by the fire looking at an engagement tablet filled with entries, on the mantelpiece.

'Father Russell says they have been asking you again to stand for Parliament,' she said timidly, as he came in.

'Yes, there is a sudden vacancy. Old Jacob Cherritt is dead.'

'And you won't?'

He shook his head.

'No,' he said, after a pause. 'I am not their man; they would be altogether disappointed in me.'

She understood the sad reverie of the face, and said no more.

No. For new friends, new surroundings, efforts of another type, his power was now irrevocably gone; he shrank more than ever from the egotisms of competition. But within the old lines he had recovered an abundant energy. Among his workmen; amid the details now fortunate, now untoward of his labours for the solution of certain problems of industrial ethics; in the working of the remarkable pamphlet scheme dealing with social and religious fact, which was fast making his name famous in the ears of the England which thinks and labours; and in the self-devoted help of the unhappy,—he was developing more and more the idealist's qualities, and here and there—inevitably—the idealist's mistakes. His face, as middle life was beginning to shape it—with its subtle and sensitive beauty—was at once the index of his strength and his limitations.

He and Dora stood talking a while about certain public schemes that were in progress for the bettering of Ancoats. Then he said with sudden emphasis:

'*Ah!* if one could but jump a hundred years and see what England will be like! But these northern towns, and this northern life, on the whole fill one with hope. There is a strong social spirit and strong individualities to work on.'

Dora was silent. From her Churchwoman's point of view the prospect was not so bright.

'Well, people seem to think that co-operation is going to do everything,' she said vaguely.

'We all cry our own nostrums,' he said, laughing; 'what co-operation has done up here in the north is wonderful! It has been the making of thousands. But the world is not going to

give itself over wholly to committees. There will be room enough for the one-man-power at any rate for generations to come. What we want is leaders; but leaders who will feel themselves "members of one body," instruments of one social order.'

They stood together a minute in silence; then he went out to the stairs and called: 'Sandy, you monkey, come along!'

Sandy came shouting and leaping downstairs, as lithe and handsome as ever, and as much of a compound of the elf and the philosopher.

'I *know* Auntie Dora's brought me a present,' he said, looking up into her face,—'but father's locked it up!'

David chased him out of doors with contumely, and they all took the tram to Victoria Street.

Once there, Sandy was in the seventh heaven. The shops were ablaze with lights, and gay with every Christmas joy; the pavements were crowded with a buying and gaping throng. He pulled at his father's hand, exclaiming here and pointing there, till David, dragged hither and thither, had caught some of the boy's mirth and pleasure.

But Dora walked apart. Her heart was a little heavy and dull, her face weary. In reality, though David's deep and tender gratitude and friendship towards her could not express themselves too richly, she felt, as the years went on, more and more divided from him and Sandy. She was horrified at the things which David published, or said in public; she had long dropped any talk with the child on all those subjects which she cared for most. Young as he was, the boy showed a marvellous understanding in some ways of his father's mind, and there were moments when she felt a strange and dumb irritation towards them both.

Christmas too, in spite of her Christian fervour, had always its sadness for her. It reminded her of her father, and of the loneliness of her personal life.

'How father would have liked all this crowd!' she said once to David as they passed into Market Street.

David assented with instant sympathy, and they talked a little of the vanished wanderer as they walked along, she with a yearning passion which touched him profoundly.

He and Sandy escorted her up the Ancoats High Street, and at last they turned into her own road. Instantly Dora perceived a little crowd round her door, and, as soon as she was seen, a waving of hands, and a Babel of voices.

'What is it?' she cried, paling, and began to run.

David and Sandy followed. She had already flown upstairs; but the shawled mill-girls, round the door, flushed with excitement, shouted their news into his ear.

'It's her feyther, sir, as ha coom back after aw these years—an he's sittin by the fire quite nat'ral like, Mary Styles says—and they put him in a mad-house in furrin parts, they did—an his hair's quite white—an oh! sir, yo mun just goo up an look.'

Pushed by eager hands, and still holding Sandy, David, though half unwilling, climbed the narrow stairs.

The door was half open. And there, in his old chair, sat Daddy, his snow-white hair falling on his shoulders, a childish excitement and delight on his blanched face. Dora was kneeling at his feet, her head on his knees, sobbing.

David took Sandy up in his arms.

'Be quiet, Sandy; don't say a word.'

And he carried him downstairs again, and into the midst of the eager crowd.

'I think,' he said, addressing them, 'I would go home if I were you—if you love her.'

They looked at his shining eyes and twitching lips, and understood.

'Aye, sir, aye, sir, yo're abeawt reet—we'st not trouble her, sir.'

He carried his boy home, Sandy raining questions in a tumult of excitement. Then when the child was put to bed he sat on in his lonely study, stirred to his sensitive depths by the thought of Dora's long waiting and sad sudden joy—by the realisation of the Christmas crowds and merriment—by the sharp memory of his own dead. Towards midnight, when all was still, he opened the locked drawer which held for him the few things which symbolised and summed up his past—a portrait of Lucy, by the river under the trees, taken by a travelling photographer, not more than six weeks before her death—a little collection of pictures of Sandy from babyhood onwards—Louie's breviary—his father's dying letter—a book which had belonged to Ancrum, his vanished friend. But though he took thence his wife's picture, communing awhile, in a passion of yearning, with its weary plaintive eyes, he did not allow himself to sink for long into the languor of memory and grief. He knew the perils of his own nature, and there was in him a stern sense of the difficulty of living aright, and the awfulness of the claim made by God and man on the strength and will of the individual. It seemed to him that he had been 'taught of God' through natural affection, through repentance, through sorrow, through the constant energies of the intellect. Never had the Divine voice been clearer to him, or the Divine Fatherhood more real. Freely he had received—but only that he might freely give. On this Christmas night he renewed every past vow of the soul, and in so doing rose once more into that state and temper which is man's pledge and earnest of immortality—since already, here and now, it is the eternal life begun.

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